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Hussein, Arafat Agree on Joint Platform

PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat and Jordan's King Hussein announced February 11 that they had agreed on a joint political position. The final details of the agreement were wrapped up during Arafat's 24-hour visit to Jordan the same day. Details have not been officially released but the announcement appeared to be timed to coincide with Saudi King Fahd's US visit February 11 and the upcoming meeting between Egyptian President Husni Mubarak and US President Reagan in Washington next month.

According to press leaks in a number of Arab capitals, the Jordanian-PLO agreement is based on several overriding principles: territory in exchange for peace, the right of Palestinians to determine their own future and the importance of convening an international conference to reach a solution to the conflict.

The Kuwaiti daily *Al Anba'* reported February 13 that the new agreement is based on the following eight points:

1. A call for an international conference which all concerned parties — including the PLO, as the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people — would attend.

2. Recognition of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination.

3. Both sides agree to all UN resolutions concerning the Palestinian problem and the Arab-Israeli conflict. Both sides point to the necessity of returning all occupied territories, including Jerusalem.

4. Agreement to work for an independent Palestinian state in the context of a Jordanian-Palestinian confederation.

5. All Palestinian-Jordanian efforts must be based on previous Arab summits, particularly Rabat in 1974 (which delegated the PLO as the sole legitimate representive of the Palestinians) and Fez in 1982.

6. The participation of the PLO in any Arab delegation to peace talks.

7. The implementation of UN resolutions regarding the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes or receive compensation.

8. Acceptance of the principle of the exchange of territory for peace.

Among Palestinian officials, the response to the news was mixed. Khalil al-Wazir (Abu Jihad), member of the Fatah central committee and deputy commander-in-chief, told *Al Fajr* Arabic daily February 14 that the agreement is based on national principles as outlined in PNC resolutions. Abu Jihad said that the agreement is based on previous Arab summit resolutions and UN agreements but does not accept UN resolution 242. PLO executive member Abd al-Razaq Yehia also announced that the PLO continues to reject UN resolution 242.

PLO Executive Committee member Mohammed Milhem, who was elected mayor of Halhoul in 1976 but subsequently dismissed and deported by the Israelis in June of 1980, told UPI in Amman that the agreement covered principles which the PLO has announced its acceptance of in the past. Its importance, said Milhem, lies in the fact that it is "a message from the Palestinian people to the world, including the US and friendly socialist countries, that the PLO and Jordan have agreed on a joint stand and that there are no obstacles for a serious peace effort." Milhem expressed his hope that the agreement would result in "a unified Arab stand for peace in the Middle East." He also called on other Arab countries, Syria in particular, to support the agreement.

Farouk Qaddoumi, head of the PLO's political department and member of the PLO Executive Committee, said that the PLO's relations with any Arab country are "based on the 16th and 17th session of the PNC and on the Palestinian people's absolute right to determine its future alone without any outside interference." Qaddoumi told Radio *Monte Carlo* that in any peace conference, the PLO will insist on the participation of "an independent delegation" and refuse any joint delegation or indirect representation. Qaddoumi also said that the PLO rejects UN resolution 242, the Reagan Plan, Camp David and any other formula that ignores the Palestinian people's rights to self-determination, independent statehood and return.

However, the Democratic Alliance (which includes the PFLP, the DFLP, the Communist Party and the Palestine Liberation Front) strongly denounced the agreement. The Democratic Alliance issued a statement February 13 opposing the agreement, saying it consisted of most of the principles suggested by King Hussein during the 17th PNC conference (which the Democratic Alliance boycotted). The statement said that the principle of exchanging land for peace aims at ending the conflict in the area by changing it to a border conflict

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Kahane Uses Ramallah for Publicity Stunt

The atmosphere in the occupied city of Ramallah was extremely tense February 7 as racist MK Meir Kahane paid a surprise visit to the city. Kahane hurried through the city streets flanked by half a dozen Israeli soldiers, then prayed at the site in al-Bireh where an Israeli soldier was shot dead February 4. Kahane ended his tour with a sidewalk talk in which he denounced the killing of the Israeli soldier and called for the expulsion of all Arabs from the occupied territories.

Kahane, who heads the racist Kach movement, is famous for blatant racist calls for the expulsion of Arabs and his attempted visits to Arab towns inside the green line to tell Palestinians to leave the country. Visits to Um al-Fahm, Taibeh and Iksal in the Triangle and Galilee were repelled by turnouts of thousands of Arab and Jewish demonstrators.

Kahane's trip to Ramallah was not as dramatic, perhaps because it was kept secret until the last moment. The only protest came from a group of Palestinian lawyers who, upon hearing of Kahane's visit, held a work-stoppage protest for several hours.

Yousef Ju'beh, who owns a bookshop in the centre of Ramallah, said that when Kahane arrived, people started to gather near the *manara* in the city centre but that army patrols came through and used loudspeakers to tell crowds to disperse. Ju'beh said that the only people who followed Kahane around were Israeli and foreign journalists, who obviously knew of the visit in advance.

Iz-Din Aryan, a Ramallah pharmaceutical manufacturer, told *Al Fajr* that Kahane's actions were meant both to "incite Arab residents and attract media attention to his campaign of racism and fascism."

Aryan called Kahane's visit "provocative" and demanded "an end to such visits."

When Kahane visited Ramallah in May of 1980, Palestinian demonstrators routed him out of the city. The protestors had met at the Ramallah municipality, which was run until 1982 by elected Mayor Karim Khalaf before being taken over by an Israeli officer. Kahane has been on military duty in Ramallah as a reserve soldier as well.

Earlier in the day February 7 military authorities stormed the new al-Bireh high school and ordered it closed after pupils allegedly stoned a passing Israeli vehicle. The school was reopened three days later. A school source told *Al Fajr* that army vehicles were positioned around the school and "caused anxiety" among the students. Their presence alone "is as good as any reason for unrest" in the school, said the source.

Al-Am'ari refugee camp at the entrance to Ramallah also got its share of military harassment as authorities imposed an all-night curfew February 6 on the pretext that camp youths had stoned Israeli vehicles. A group of youngsters were reported to have been arrested by the military.

Meanwhile, in downtown Ramallah 150 stores that were ordered closed after the February 4 shooting of an Israeli soldier were reopened four days later. But both sides of the street on which the soldier was shot remained closed off with barbed wire and under tight military surveillance.

Israeli Knesset member Meir Kahane marching in Ramallah protected by the the Israeli army./RI

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Israeli Warplanes Bombard Eastern Beqa'

The Israeli army is taking violent measures of intense search and arrest and house destruction campaigns and aerial bombardments in south Lebanon to counter increased attacks by Lebanese national fighters. Three Israeli soldiers were killed in an attack last week and a fourth died this week from wounds February 10.

Israeli soldiers killed a Lebanese villager from Tura village, near Tyre, wounded two others and destroyed two houses in the village February 12. Soldiers arrived in the village on foot and armoured personnel carriers, broke into the villagers' houses and opened fire at surprised residents. Israeli military sources claimed, "Villagers tried to oppose the searches and some suspects tried to escape." Israeli soldiers arrested five residents on charges of planning and carrying out attacks on the Israeli soldiers.

During the Tura raid, Israeli bulldozers demolished two houses where military authorities claimed to have found Kalashnikov rifles, machine guns, explosives and pistols. Two reserve soldiers were killed February 10 two kilometres north of Metulla. Turai Dov Levy, 21, from Ramat Gan was killed near the Zahrani River when an Israeli patrol came under fire of Lebanese national fighters. Three soldiers were wounded in this attack.

An Israeli soldier was lightly wounded February 11 when Lebanese fighters threw a grenade at a South Lebanon Army post in Sidon. On the same day, a Katyusha rocket was fired at an Israeli military post near Burj al-Shamali refugee camp, east of Tyre. Israeli sources reported no injuries. Six Israeli soldiers were wounded February 12 when Lebanese national fighters used rocket-propelled grenades and light arms in a night attack on an army base near the village of Ruman, east of Nabatiyeh.

An Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army soldier was also wounded the night of February 13 when Lebanese fighters opened light arms fire on an SLA roadblock in Sila, near Nabatiyeh. Israeli sources said that Israeli military forces which crossed the Awali River took four fighters prisoner.

Israeli police minister Haim Bar Lev personally witnessed an attack on a South Lebanon Army post in Tyre February 8 when Lebanese fighters opened light arms fire from an orchard at a nearby base of the South Lebanon army. Israeli military sources reported no injuries.

On the same day, one SLA soldier was slightly wounded when a roadside bomb exploded as an SLA convoy was passing and also on the same day, light arms fire and rocket-propelled grenades were shot at Israeli military posts at Rashidiya and Ansar. Israeli military sources again reported no injuries.

Commenting on the Israeli counter-measures, George Habash, the secretary-general of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, said last week that there was a fascist-Zionist plan to commit massacres in Palestinian refugee camps in the south. Israeli sources reported that Israeli planes demolished a one-storey building near the Beirut-Damascus highway in the vicinity of the village of Thalabya February 10. A Lebanese source said the building had been evacuated by the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine several days earlier and that a woman and child who had sought refuge in the building were killed. Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres said February 10, addressing Dutch Keren Hayesod leaders, that "the raid was in line with Israeli policy to hit 'terrorist bases' wherever they are."

The Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army completed February 13 their evacuation of Sidon and took up new positions west of Jezzine. The northern district commander, Ori Orr, told Israel Radio February 13 that two-thirds of the South Lebanon Army (SLA) have fled from their military units. *Monte Carlo* Radio, quoting sources of the Lebanese National Front, said that the (SLA) is in a state of disorder after the escalating military operations.

Ain al-Hilweh Finds Protection in Sidon Community

Palestine refugees living at Ain al-Hilweh camp, Sidon, have initiated meetings over recent months to establish friendly links with community leaders in the area. The 60,000 refugees living in and around Sidon form the largest single grouping of Palestine refugees in Lebanon. Nearly half live in the camp adjoining the city.

An official with UNRWA, which facilitated the meetings, said recently, "We have been meeting Palestinians, other Muslims and Christians and government representatives to avoid problems that might take place. Each night we hear a lot of shooting and there have been many attempts to make trouble in the camps, especially in Ain al-Hilweh, but until now no attempt has succeeded."

Support by Lebanese Villagers

Evidence of good community relations came recently when armed intruders tried to take two men away from the Palestine refugee camp at nearby Mieh Mieh. Christian villagers intereceded and freed the Palestine refugees.

For many refugees in the Sidon area the most pressing problem at present is the shortage of some basic foods, coupled with a sudden increase in inflation. One Palestine refugee living in Sidon said last week: "Food is short in the south, especially flour and sugar. In Tyre it is worse than here. The price of flour has tripled in the last three weeks."

Rising prices and unemployment triggered a demonstration by Ain al-Hilweh refugees in December, when more than 1000 angry protesters occupied UNRWA's Sidon office to demand the restoration of emergency rations, which stopped with the end of UNRWA's official emergency operations in March 1984.

Welfare Rations Blocked

UNRWA said it told the demonstrators that it did not have the resources to reinstate emergency rations. Since the protest, the refugees have refused to allow UNRWA to distribute food to 9500 destitute refugees in the Sidon area who are still entitled to special rations as welfare cases.

In the streets of Ain al-Hilweh, there is no outward sign of tension or shortage, according to an UNRWA report issued February 11. Merchants who resurrected their shops from the rubble of the 1982 invasion appear to have ample food supplies.

Bumpy main roads in the camp testify to the political problems of refugee life. UNRWA says it has so far not found an acceptable source of the asphalt and bitumen needed for road surfacing.

Nazareth Mass Gathering Honours Qawasmeh

Nazareth hosted a commemorative gathering February 9 on the 40th day after the death of West Bank leader Fahd Qawasmeh. Over 700 persons braved tight Israeli restrictions to attend the public eulogy, which was sponsored by the Progressive List for Peace. Speeches honouring the assassinated Hebron mayor were delivered by national figures, unionists and political activists from all parts of Palestine.

Tens of prominent West Bank and Gaza Strip personalities and members of the organising committee were prevented from attending the meeting. The army blocked off the four main roads leading to Nazareth from the West Bank and soldiers were provided with names of Palestinian figures who were forbidden to attend the mass meeting.

The Israeli Communist Party (Rakah), supporters of the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality (DFPE) in the Galilee and Triangle, and DFPE sympathisers in the occupied territories boycotted the ceremony. *Al Ittihad* newspaper, the mouthpiece of Rakah, stated that the boycott was declared because the PLP festival sponsors worked alone and did not ask Rakah to share the preparations. A number of West Bank figures closely aligned to Rakah also accused the PLP of placing their names on the organising committee without even contacting them. Among those named as members of the committee were Bashir Barghouthi, editor of *Al Talia* newspaper, and Ibrahim Dakkak, head of the West Bank Engineers' Union. Neither attended the ceremony.

Al Tadamun newspaper, the mouthpiece of the PLP, responded to Rakah's attacks by claiming that they contacted MK Tawfiq Zayyad, the Rakah mayor of Nazareth, and invited him to attend the Qawasmeh commemoration.

At the festival, many speeches and eulogies for the late Qawasmeh were presented. Halfway through the proceedings, Master of Ceremonies Fawzi Abdullah abruptly stopped and announced: "A fascist member of right-wing Tehiya Party, Michael Eitan, is present at the festival." The audience responded by shouting and the speeches continued.

The main speech of the day was delivered by advocate Abd al-Rahman Natshe on behalf of the deputy-mayor of Hebron, Mustafa Natshe, who was prevented by the Israelis from attending. Natshe spoke about the severely constrained municipal finances Qawasmeh could draw on as mayor of Hebron and how he surmounted that obstacle. Natshe also praised Qawasmeh's political activities abroad after he was deported. Natshe appealed to the Jordanians to identify the culprits who shot and killed Qawasmeh in Amman on December 29. Natshe also called for the recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinians and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

An Israeli writer, Amos Kenan, delivered a short speech in which he said the joint task of Israelis and Palestinians was to bring about peace in the region.

Mahmoud Na'amneh, head of the Islamic Initiative Committee in the Galilee and Triangle, said: "Qawasmeh was a victim of the independent Palestinian decision." Hilmi Hanoun, mayor of Tulkarm, sent a letter in which he called for resolving outstanding disputes and restoring national unity between the Democratic Alliance factions and Fatah.

The last speaker, Fayez Qawasmeh, Fahd Qawasmeh's older brother, told the audience: "I say to the delegate of satan who thought that by killing Qawasmeh, the Palestinian cause would be killed, that the people of Palestine will remain forever and Fahd's principles and aspirations are eternal."

Letter to the Editor

To the Editor,

I was surprised and shocked to read the article "In wake of Pharmaceutical Scam: Quality of Drugs Must Be Controlled," in *Al Fajr*, No. 249, February 8, 1985.

The article in most of its content is based on incorrect and unfounded information regarding Palestinian factories and the behaviour of Palestinian pharmacists. The usage of my name based on an "off-the-record" explanation gave the impression that I am behind the article and support its contents, while in fact I am against much of its contents.

I respect and support your newspaper and I hope in the future that before publishing an article of such a serious nature, the responsible sources are approached and their opinion taken into consideration.

I leave myself the freedom to express my opinion fully on the matter, hoping to receive a positive response.

Isma'il Taziz
Chairman of the Pharmacists Association, West Bank

Editors' note:

To the best of our knowledge the information contained in the story is accurate and fair.

Information regarding the above-mentioned article was gathered from sources related to the local pharmaceutical industries. Isma'il Taziz only stated that "original medicines are carefully checked for quality by government inspectors and laboratories" and that "his union has been attempting to form a committee that will be responsible for overseeing quality control of medicines used by West Bank Palestinians."

THIS WEEK'S CENSORSHIP

Following is a breakdown of censorship cuts for issue 250, February 15, 1985:

Number of original articles submitted to censors	12
Number of articles totally censored out	3
Number of articles returned	1
Number of articles partially censored but used	1
Number of articles passed	7

Arrests at Dheisheh Continued

An Israeli military court in Nablus refused to release six other residents of Dheisheh camp on bail February 13. The detainees have been held since February 2 at Fara'a on charges of incitement and throwing stones at another camp resident, Yassin Jaber, who is a leader of an armed gang of known collaborators from outside the camp. Jaber and his gang have staged a series of attacks on outspoken Dheisheh nationalists over the past few weeks.

The Israeli prosecutor told the Nablus court that police are still interrogating the detainees. Advocate Mohammed Na'amneh argued that after 12 days of interrogation there was still no evidence to corroborate the charges and therefore demanded that the court release the detainees. Referring to the 220 Molotovs thrown by collaborators against nationalists, Na'amneh said: "The attackers who were behind last month's wave of violence in the camp are enjoying their freedom while the attacked have been subjected to cruel abuse and punishment."

All other detainees who have been arrested in successive raids staged by Israeli border guards since January 26 will appear before military court in the next 10 days.

Only four detainees have so far been released from Fara'a, on February 13.

Israeli protesters and some residents from Fara'a refugee camp demonstrated February 10 before Fara'a prison for half an hour and demanded the release of Dheisheh detainees.

The Haifa-based *Al Ittihad* daily reported February 10 that the camp is under continual and strict military surveillance and checkposts are erected at entrances to check ID cards of residents and passers-by.

The newspaper reported that soldiers ransacked a home in the camp February 9. The women's committees in Dheisheh held a sit-in strike at UNRWA headquarters in the camp February 9 to condemn the late-night raids, arrests and other severe punitive measures of collective punishment practised by Israeli soldiers as well as settlers. They demanded that UNRWA file a complaint to the United Nations against Israeli practices in Dheisheh camp. The women also demanded the removal of Moshe Levinger from the camp. The UNRWA director in the camp dismissed the women from the UNRWA headquarters.

Benvenisti: West Bank Settlers Have Doubled Since 1983

Israeli settlers living in the occupied West Bank numbered 42,600 by the end of 1984 and occupied 114 settlements, according to a report distributed February 10 by the West Bank Data Base Project. Seventy-two percent of the settlers (about 30,000) live in 15 large settlements while the rest are scattered over the remaining 99 settlements, most of which are very small, said the report prepared by Meron Benvenisti, the centre's director and former deputy to Jerusalem's Israeli Mayor Teddy Kollek. One-fourth of the total number of settlers live in Maale Adumim settlement, on the Jericho road just outside Jerusalem. Another 78,000 settlers live in settlements within the Jerusalem boundaries and were not counted in the survey.

According to Benvenisti, the number of West Bank settlers doubled from the 1983 figure of 20,700. Twenty-eight settlements were added in 1983 and 15 more in 1984, bringing the total to 114.

Forty-two percent of the settlements are no bigger than 20-family enclaves. Thirty-eight percent of the settlements house between 20-50 families; 8 percent house 50-100 families; 4.5 per-

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Breakthrough in Palestinian-Jordanian Relations

News Analysis
by Hanna Siniora

The mere fact that the PLO and Jordan reached an accord is in itself an important achievement since most parties to the conflict were betting on a break-up in Palestinian-Jordanian relations. Even some members of the pro-Arafat coalition expected this trend.

The Palestinian people have indicated clearly that they will continue to refuse a subordinate vassal role and are ready to defy any Arab state, including Syria. Jordan realises this position, for the lengthy negotiations leading to the accord demonstrated that, in essence, both partners gave in to the wishes of the other party: Arafat accepted the principle of territories in exchange for peace and King Hussein recognised the strong reservations of the PLO concerning parts of UN Security Council Resolution 242.

Many have worked to obstruct Palestinian-Jordanian coopetation, or to openly attack any relationship with Jordan. But those who claim that the PLO surrendered its role of sole representative should note that King Hussein had in fact abandoned his 1972 United Kingdom Plan, which would have infringed on the role of the PLO as sole representative. Instead the King accepted a confederal structure with the Palestinians, a genuine gesture on his part to reassure the Palestinians of his adherence to the Rabat summit resolutions designating the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people.

Bolder steps to define the proposed confederal structure between Jordan and the Palestinian state would bolster cooperation between the partners to the accord. An understanding on the basic legislative bodies of the confederal state should be elucidated. Jordan should dissolve its present parliament and call for local elections in the East Bank. The PNC should be designated as the legislative body for the occupied territories until free elections can take place and an agreement should be reached on a confederal legislative body. These clarifications would refute claims by opponents of the accord that Arafat has exchanged Syrian tutelage for Jordanian dominance, while at the same time strengthen Jordanian-Palestinian cooperation.

The accord in itself is not an all-out cure for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Present conditions in Israel and within the current coalition government do not favour the peace process. Peres and his Labour Party still adhere to the Allon Plan (territorial compromise). Israel must understand that King Hussein's principle of an exchange of territories for peace means the return of East Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in return for a peaceful settlement. This is the bottom line. But this is not the position of the Labour Party, without even considering the position of the Likud.

As a result of the PLO-Jordan accord, Israel and the US will have to reconsider their positions. Their initial response has been ambiguous and unencouraging. European reaction is important as well, but so far not apparent.

It is too early to press for concrete results, but definitely the accord strengthens Jordanian-Palestinian relations and it clearly demonstrates Palestinian willingness to enter the peace process.

If the present positions of both Israel and the US fail to evolve, this would doom any breakthrough. The moderate PLO leadership might face harsher attacks from the radicals, but the accord will not hurt or stop the struggle for liberation.

High Court Halts Israeli Construction Co. Work on Bidya Land

The Israeli High Court in Jerusalem issued an order *nisi* February 13 that an Israeli construction company, Yakir, must halt all activity on Arab-owned land in the village of Bidya in the Nablus district. The company, which is building a road to the Elkana (H) settlement, had continued to raze crops in violation of several previous orders issued by the local Nablus court in 1983 and 1984 to stop uprooting olive and almond trees and bulldozing on land while ownership was under court investigation.

Bidya residents have been fighting an encroaching land swipe since May 1983 when two Israeli companies, Gal and Yakir, claimed that they had bought land from the *mukhtar* of Bidya village. In fact, the *mukhtar* had forged land purchase documents for 330 dunums that belonged to 16 different residents.

On May 2, 1983, Israeli border guards shot and killed a Bidya landowner, Ibrahim Ahmad Aqra', 59, and wounded two others who were trying to prevent Israeli bulldozers from working on their land, which had been sold to Israeli land companies by fraudulent land brokers. In Nablus district court the defrauded landowners definitively proved that they had never sold their land and produced their certificates of ownership to prove it. They subsequently filed suit in the Israeli High Court against the Israeli ministers of defence and interior, the West Bank general commander and the Yakir Company to show cause why they had not complied with the Nablus court's orders. The petitioners sought High Court intervention after Tulkarm police refused to follow up their complaints that the Yakir Company was continuing its work on their land in violation of the Nablus court order.

Speaking on behalf of the defendants in the High Court, the Israeli government lawyer admitted that the company's digging and uprooting of trees was illegal. He then said that he was ready to abide by the court order "unless certain political and legal conditions" came to pass.

On December 17, 1984, the land of Bidya was surveyed by the Israeli land liaison officer, representatives of the Yakir Company and the Israeli Custodian of Absentee Property, who went to the disputed area and found that all the documents and maps submitted by the Yakir Company had been forged. Last week, the lawyers representing the 16 Bidya landowners received a reply from the Israeli legal advisor in the West Bank to their request that police conduct an immediate in-depth investigation into forged land sales transacted by "land brokers" in coordination with Israeli construction companies. The legal advisor informed the lawyers that he had instructed police to set up a special committee to investigate forged land deals.

On June 20, 1984, the Israeli High Court refused to endorse a Nablus district court decision ordering the Yakir Company to halt its destructive activities on Arab-owned land in Bidya. Instead, the court instructed the Bidya petitioners to file another petition within 10 days naming the Israeli company as a defendant in addition to the ministers of defence and interior and the West Bank military commander.

Women Against Occupation group demonstrating outside Neve Tertza prison February 1 against prison authorities' attempts to force prisoners to work in defence-related jobs.

Neve Terza Prisoners Go on Hunger Strike

Twenty-three political prisoners in the Neve Terza Women's Prison began a hunger strike February 12. According to the Israeli daily *Hadashot*, February 13, prisoners told the prison warden that they would "strike to the end."

The prisoners are striking because of new restrictions by prison authorities, including limiting the time allotted for prisoners to visit one another and educational activities and study sessions without Israeli "supervision." The women prisoners are protesting against enforced factory work in defence-related industries and have been punished by the withdrawal of prison "privileges."

Security sources told *Hadashot* they believe that the strike is the first in a series of a coordinated campaign. They base their assumption on the fact that other prisons were served similar demands in the past few days. (Translation: Hadashot, February 13, 1985)

'Gaza First' Autonomy Scheme Resurfaces in Israeli Cabinet

More than six years after the conclusion of the Camp David accords between Egypt and Israel, Israeli government officials are trying to resurrect autonomy plans for the occupied territories, beginning with the Gaza Strip.

In a front-page story, the Hebrew daily *HaAretz* reported February 7 that Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres told a closed cabinet session that Israel should reconsider the possibility of instituting autonomy in the Gaza Strip as a first step to changing the status of the occupied territories. According to the Israeli newspaper, which quoted "official sources close to Shimon Peres," the Labour prime minister intends to appoint a special team to study applying autonomy first in Gaza so that West Bank residents will be "encouraged" to accept similar steps.

The US-sponsored Camp David accords, which were signed September 17 1978 between Egyptian President Anwar Sadat (assassinated in 1981) and former Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin of the Likud Party, specified that the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza were to be granted full autonomy as a step towards overall peace in the Middle East. The implementation of autonomy was left up to Israeli and Egyptian negotiators, whose wide differences of opinion rapidly torpedoed negotiations. The idea of autonomy, however, was unanimously rejected by the Palestinian population in the West Bank and Gaza because it did not address the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and an independent state and failed to mention the Palestine Liberation Organisation as sole representative of the Palestinian people.

Gaza and West Bank figures scoffed at the idea that the renewed autonomy intiatives could amount to anything. "The Camp David accords were rejected by our people and so will the renewed plans about giving autonomy to Gaza alone because this is only an extension to Camp David," Fayez Abu Rahmeh, head of the Lawyers' Union in Gaza, told *Al Fajr* this week. "Autonomy will not work because it fails to meet the national aspiration of our people for full independence," he added.

"Granting autonomy to Gaza alone is an attempt to split our people," said retired Gaza lawyer Zuhair Rayyis. "If Peres is really looking for peace in this region then let him come forward openly with his intentions and say exactly what he wants," Rayyis, who is a former member of the Palestine National Council, challenged.

Ibrahim Dakkak agreed that the high-level publicity about autonomy in Gaza is intended to split Palestinian ranks. Dakkak, who also heads the Engineers' Union in the West Bank, said this most recent autonomy effort is only an attempt to resurrect American credibility in the region, which was shattered in Lebanon and elsewhere. He said he believed that this talk was only to test local reaction to autonomy and an attempt to renew Egyptian and Jordanian confidence in the US. But, he added, the autonomy plan "will not work because it contradicts facts imposed on the occupied land." Dakkak was referring to the massive settlements in the West Bank and Gaza and the insistence of the hardline Likud faction in the Israeli unity government that the occupied territories fall within Israel's permanent borders.

Ezer Weizman (Yahad), Minister without Portfolio in the Israeli prime minister's office, has been linked with the renewed autonomy talk. Weizman, who served as defence minister in former Likud governments, told a group of Labour Party members February 8 that he supports granting autonomy to the Palestinians in the occupied territories, even if it is accomplished unilaterally. Weizman is currently leading a campaign to abolish the office of the advisor on Arab affairs in the prime minister's office and is gradually himself becoming the premier's advisor on Arab issues within the "green line" and in the occupied areas. Weizman played an instrumental role for Israel in the Camp David negotiations.

Israeli Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir (Likud), who is scheduled to assume the prime minister post in less than 15 months, rejected the notion of carrying out autonomy first in Gaza. Speaking to reporters February 7 following a meeting of the Herut Party secretariat, Shamir said he rejected the idea unless it encompassed the West Bank as well, as specified in the Camp David agreements.

Haidar Abd al-Shafi, head of the Red Crescent Society in Gaza, told *Al Fajr* that he feels the Israeli government, by talking about autonomy, is trying to leave the impression that it wants peace, probably to please Arab governments in the US sphere of influence who frequently mention the need to "save what [land] can be saved." He mentioned the speech of Jordan's King Hussein at the Palestine National Council session last November 22 as one factor that led to the current talk about autonomy.

Local observers noted that the current reference to autonomy follows the recent talks between Egypt and Israel on Taba and the decision by the Israeli government to withdraw unilaterally from occupied south Lebanon. These two issues, together with an autonomy plan for the West Bank and Gaza, have been set as preconditions by Egypt's Hosni Mubarak for normalising Egyptian-Israeli relations, which suffered a setback when Israel invaded Lebanon in 1982. It is also considered as a step encouraged by Egypt in order to draw Jordan to the negotiating table with Israel.

Map of Gaza Strip showing the settlements.

Gaza Eye-Witness Reports On Land Seizures

On February 3, Dr Joseph al-Ghazi, secretary of the Israeli League for Civil and Human Rights, visited the Gaza Strip and wrote the following report

"The occupation authorities in Gaza have begun to take steps to expropriate 5000 dunums of agricultural land south of the city, near the Wadi Gaza bridge. Farmers were notified and 10 days ago grapevines were uprooted on one of the plots.

"In the middle of January 1985, a few dozen farmers in the Zaytun and Abu Midan blocs in Gaza, which respectively encompass 3000 and 2000 dunums of land, were ordered to appear before the deputy chief of the civil administration of Gaza, captain Adiv Hasson, on January 21, 1985. (Captain Hasson was involved in the incident in which Mohammed Hassan Abu Amra lost an eye, in May 1984.) Most of the land in question is being used for the cultivation of vineyards and orchards, some of which are up to 70 years old.

"Upon arriving at the meeting, the farmers were sent to see Adiv Hasson one by one, and in the presence of officials from the Ministries of Finance and Agriculture and from the Israel Land Authority, were told that their plots were state property (Amiraya and Jiftlik) and were ordered to leave them immediately; they were also told not to attempt to return to them, to stop cultivating their vineyards and orchards and to enter into negotiations with the compensation board set up by the civil administration.

"All of the farmers responded on the spot by saying that they would not allow their land to be expropriated and that they considered the authorities' attempt to be a case of sheer robbery. Furthermore, they said that they would continue to work their plots and would not accept compensation.

"One of the farmers, Abd al-Karim Isma'il al-Taltini, whose family has been farming 200 dunums of land in the Gaza Zaytun bloc together with a few other farmers since the Ottoman administration, told me that he spoke out against the expropriation in front of about 10 other farmers, rejecting any attempt to negotiate compensation. Captain Adiv Hasson responded angrily by saying that the land would be expropriated by force if necessary. In order to lend credence to his statement, he sent a bulldozer and a bunch of soldiers to al-Taltini's fields on January 23 and they destroyed about 40 dunums of grapevines.

"On February 3, I visited the site. The terrain is sandy and there are many dunes there. I saw fruit trees and grapevines that are clearly decades old. Cultivating fruit trees and vineyards in this area demands a great deal of work over a long period of time; in order to overcome the effects of erosion farmers plant saplings deep in the earth, sometimes five to six metres down, in order to exploit the layer of silt below the sandy surface.

"I saw the tracks of a bulldozer and scores of uprooted grapevines. It appears that the uprooting operations have been halted for the time being, in the wake of the telegrammes the farmers sent to the government and their appeals to Red Cross representatives who visited the area a number of times.

"I also visited Mohammed Zabut's plot, which was damaged two years ago when his grapevines and fruit trees were uprooted. When new vines began to sprout last year, they too were uprooted. I saw the remains of a house and a well that had also been destroyed by the authorities. Zabut was arrested after resisting the uprooting operations. He told me that 336 of his trees had been destroyed.

Continued on page 13.

Censor Bars Gaza Ghetto Film

The documentary film *Gaza Ghetto* on life in the occupied Gaza Strip, produced and directed by noted Swedish filmmaker Pea Holmquist, was banned February 6 by the Israeli Board for Censorship of Films and Plays. The 80-minute film, shot on location in Jabalya refugee camp, cannot be shown in Israel or the occupied territories, according to the decision of the Israeli censors.

The documentary has been favourably reviewed by audiences in Europe and the US and was scheduled to premier locally February 28 at the East Jerusalem Nuzha el-Hakawati Theatre.

One month after the 16 mm film was submitted to Israeli civilian censors, in compliance with government regulations, it was judged to contain "fabricated and not documented facts." The banning order, signed by board chairperson Y. Yostman, also charges that the documentary "calls viewers to join the PLO, which is an organisation hostile to the state."

Gaza Ghetto documents the social and economic conditions for refugee families in the massive Jabalya refugee camp in the Gaza Strip through UNRWA archive film, newsreels and a filmed portrait of one family currently resident in the camp. There is no narration, only filmed interviews with camp residents, Israeli soldiers, settlers, Israeli chief of staff Ben Eleizer and Trade Minister Ariel Sharon. The film takes one family back to the site of Dimra, one of the hundreds of destroyed Palestinian villages in Israel, which was their home before 1948.

Lawyer Avigdor Feldman will appeal the banning order with the censorship board and take it to Israeli court if the censors refuse to release the film for local viewing.

The Dawn

AL FAJR

AL FAJR – Jerusalem Palestinian Weekly

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The Palestinian - Jordanian Accord

The Palestinian-Jordanian accord represents a significant step on the long road of Palestinian-Jordanian dialogue for a clear and steady plan of common political action. Israel and the US have always counted on the absence of such an accord and the lack of a Palestinian-Jordanian cooperation.

Before judging the agreement we would like to draw attention to the following points:

*** Arafat stressed that the agreement was based on PNC resolutions that clearly defined the PLO's relations with Jordan.**

*** He also made it clear that the aim of this common move is to help convene an international conference.**

*** The Palestinian leader emphasised that the agreement is based on UN resolutions that recognise the rights of the Palestinian people. 242 is rejected in its present form.**

*** Chairman Arafat said he does not expect a change in the American position.**

In view of all this, the move falls within the Palestinian political and diplomatic efforts to invest in the Arab potential while adhering to PNC resolutions. Let us wait and see if this Palestinian move is going to further Palestinian national aims.

AL FAJR – Jerusalem Palestinian Weekly

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In Commemoration of Qawasmeh

Who is the Killer?

by Jamil Hussein Husani

Amman:

Good morning, good evening. I yearn for a cup of coffee at your cafes. I yearn for a Lulu [Jordanian brand] cigarette, I yearn for *ka'ik* [bread] at the Third Circle, I yearn to eat Arab *mansaf* with my deported brothers in Wihdat refugee camp or even in the Jarash forests. I yearn to clap like the rest of the spectators who gathered to watch a football game at your international stadium.

• • •

Amman:

If I get an exit visa from the authorities concerned and come to you, would you let me do whatever I wished, without being followed by secret servicemen? I would like to inform you that I am unwanted here. Do you accept me as a guest? What does hospitality mean to you? A stab in the back at the Third Circle? Or a few bullets from a silencer-equipped gun in the chest, heart, and neck at the Fourth Circle?

• • •

Amman:

Are you Delilah? Or did Delilah come to you with a false passport? Beirut, the beautiful, was our trench and mass grave. Before that, Jarash was so. Have you become again a trap for revolutionaries like the rest of the foolish Arab capitals? Forgive me, Amman. You do have a place in my heart. Say that I am a crazy and irrational person. How can I be sane in an Arab era plagued by terror, cowardice and failure? I am one of the kind, poor people... a mutineer. To you, an outlaw — and against the order designed in Arab salons. Call me whatever you want, but I will remain a human being. Do you know what a human being is? An extremely rare commodity that does not exist in the Arab markets. A commodity that does not come through ports, like vodka bottles. It is unavailable in an era when man is besieged and hounded, an era which is its own best eyewitness. An era whose children will write that we lived in an age that witnessed the murder of prophets.

• • •

Amman:

Who killed the beautiful Hebronite Knight in your arms? He was forced to come to you. There was no time for us to shake hands with him, to embrace him and shower him with gifts. Had I been given time, I would have pleaded with him to carry the fancy Nylon underwear and socks that are made in nearby Talpiot. I would have ripped off the Hebrew lables and written instead, "Made by the National Company, Ltd," in order to please you.

Why not? We used the steadfastness funds which passed through the bridges to build beer and *arak* factories and to shelter dismissed workers.

The Hebronite Knight left a small piece of paper on which he wrote, "I am not a god or an angel. I am one of you, someone just like you. I am not better than you, and for your sake and that of my sons I lived. It is my will that you take care of the Hebron vineyards which martyr Bajes Abu Atwan was planting when (the Israelis) assassinated him."

Fahd Qawasmeh

We never knew him to be an imposter, a thief, a degraded or vile person, a coward or a broker. Why then was he assassinated in midday? Why didn't you run after the killer? You are like my ignorant mother who refrained from chasing her killer for 40 years. Did the killer come to you from Aleppo, Sana'a, Khartoum? Be frank with me, Amman. I will also be frank with you or, to be more accurate, let me be frank with myself. Please... send your secret agents away, so I may converse with myself. I am a coward, even in my rebellion. All Arab novelists and poets are cowards, starting with Abu Hayan al-Tawhidi * to Khalil Hawi. ** Every Arabic-speaking person is a coward... plagued by fear and ignorance. Our calamity is that if we were told to clap, we clapped, to sing, we sang... What and why? It is shame to ask ourselves this question. It is a crime to ask our superiors. Our job — men and women — is to be parrots.

• • •

Amman:

I am not a Damascene. I am not a member of any tribe. By chance, here is my birthplace, and here is my tragedy. Where is the tool of the crime? Where are the killer's fingerprints? Where is the criminology lab? Perhaps the killer jumped from my wool coat. Was the "independent decision" the killer's fingerprints? Our decision is neither a sardine can imported from Turkey nor a passport stamped by the Damascus passport office. If you ask "Rabbi Levinger" where the independent decision comes from, surely he will point to Dheisheh children loading their school bags with stones. (Translation: Al Fajr, February 9, 1985)

* Abu Hayan al-Tawhidi was a great Arab poet, writer and intellectual in the 13th century, in the late Abbassid era. He contributed to literature by refusing traditional standards of writing. He believed the exaggerated use of assonance and formal figurative speeches made literary work empty. Tawhidi's style was totally rejected.

** Lebanese poet Khalil Hawi committed suicide to protest the Israeli invasion and Arab silence. Husani chose these two men as examples of courageous Arab poets and thinkers. ●

OPINION

AL FAJR invites our readers to contribute letters, articles and opinions. Contributions must be signed, but names may be withheld upon request.

Israelis Debate Meaning of Withdrawal

by Yehetzkel HaMeiri

The decision to withdraw from southern Lebanon touched off an acrimonious debate among Israelis who live on the state's northern border; one is either in favour of the pullout or dead set against it and there seems to be no middle ground. For Michael Ochiun of Kiryat Shemona, the pullout is tantamount to "being sentenced to death, but Shmuel Meiri of Kibbutz Dan views the whole war as a horrible tragedy."

Michael Ochiun is the leader of *Esha* — a movement formed to prevent any withdrawal of Israeli troops from Lebanon prior to a guarantee that the border population will be safe from attack. Ochiun has called on the residents of the Upper Galilee to demonstrate against the impending withdrawal.

Professor Ezran, the mayor of Kiryat Shemona did not support the movement at first but now, in the wake of the government decision to withdraw to the international border, he has changed his mind. "I whole-heartedly support the movement," he said. "I've come to realise that our dire warnings are now coming true. The government decision was made behind our backs. They didn't even bother to make the withdrawal conditional on the security of the settlements in the north of the country."

Ezran is trenchant: "The government must accept the onus for its decision. The state must safeguard our security so that we can feel as safe as Israelis living in Tel Aviv. We are the soft underbelly of the state's defence network and it is thus inconceivable that we should be left at the mercy of the Katyushas. Those who decided on pulling out must now make themselves accountable to the residents of Kiryat Shemona; if they are subjected again to Katyusha bombardments they'll leave their homes."

Threats of Evacuation

Professor Ezran claims that according to a poll carried out by *Esha*, 4500 Kiryat Shemona residents said that they would leave the city if Katyusha attacks recommenced. "It's terrible! I won't be able to stop them. The state has dropped a security bundle on our doorstep without deciding what to do if the shelling starts up again. There's no room for compromises when it comes to security."

I heard the same sort of thing in Metulla. Situated on the border, the town has been taxed to the limit in the past and at present its inhabitants are extremely anxious about what the future holds in store. Shalom Fine, one of the few old-timers left in Metulla, told me: "The cabinet ministers who decided to withdraw the troops from Lebanon have never felt what it's like to be subjected to a Katyusha attack or a terrorist infiltration, for that matter. If they lived here, I'm pretty sure that they would have voted differently. We aren't prepared to go back to living the way we did."

His wife Shula has lived in Metulla since arriving in Israel 50 years ago. "For the past two years," she told me, "I've been able to experience what it's like to live without fear. The residents of Tel Aviv and Herzliya take that for granted. I'm not ready to go back to being afraid all the time."

On the main road of Metulla, I found two old women sitting on a bench and asked them how they felt about the pullout. "We're worried very worried," said Yehudit Roznik.

"We're in favour of the withdrawal — after all, our boys have been paying with their lives for being up there. And we all have sons and grandsons in the army. But we're very worried about what's going to happen," said Leah Weinstein.

Most people's fears revolve around their children. Shalom and Shula Fine have 16 grandchildren and four great grandchildren. Most of them live in Metulla. "How can we go on herding our children underground?" asked Shula. "It's clear as day that the situation will deteriorate to its pre-war state."

Kfar Yuval faces both the Syrian and the Lebanese borders. The residents of the town have experienced many attacks in the past including a terrorist incursion during which hostages were taken. There was a feeling of anxiety in the air. A young fellow by the name of Yaron Meir told me: "We won't allow ourselves to get used to being shelled constantly." Seventy-two year-old Elisha Eliyahu simply said: "Everyone is scared." He himself is anxious about his many children. "If we had no choice but to withdraw, at least we should have found a way of safeguarding our security," Esther Eliyahu told me.

Positive Feedback

But there are also many Kfar Yuval residents who are whole-heartedly in favour of the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Lebanon. "The army has done what it set out to do in Lebanon and the time has come for a pullback. With the army's help, we'll be able to protect ourselves," said a local youth who, for some reason, refused to give me his name.

Ruthi Amadi, a mother of two, stated her view in a frank and forthright manner: "It's good that the army is pulling out of Lebanon. I'm pleased with the decision in favour of a withdrawal. After all, we ought to realise that most of the country is a front on one border or another and we have to learn how to live with it."

Kibbutz Dan is a *HaShomer Ha Tzair* (Mapam) kibbutz located near Kiryat Shemona. I found a few old-timers congregated around a table in the communal dining room among whom was Shmuel "Milik" Meiri — one of the most colourful characters in the kibbutz; he was in the company of Baruch Fischer, Emmanuel Ben Shalom and Yehuda Barkai.

"The political views of the members of Kibbutz Dan are well known," said Milik. "We were against the invasion of Lebanon from the start. Today we're even more convinced that it was a

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Desecration of Religious Sites

by Rabbi M Hirsch

Bank Leumi (Zionist National Bank) was one of the main pillars of the new "state of Israel" at its inception. The bank expanded its facilities and investments, thus strengthening the foundation of the state. A recent investment of the bank has brought them unforseen financial losses. In conjuction with an affiliate German concern, a bank subsidiary, the Africa-Israel Company, acquired a large hotel in Tiberias and began to expand its facilities in order to accommodate the anticipated influx of tourism in the Galilee. During the foundation excavations on the site set aside for appendaging new wings to the existing building, which will include over a thousand additional rooms an ancient Jewish cemetery was uncovered and hundreds of graves were disturbed and uprooted. The head of the National Antiquities Department, Avi Eitan, attested to the "density" of graves on this ancient cemetery site and therefore refused to sanction the laying of the foundation for the additional wings of the hotel. Mass protests were initiated by various Jewish Orthodox groups and numerous warnings were issued by their spiritual leaders of a forthcoming boycott and ban of Bank Leumi if the cemetery desecrations were to continue. Obstinacy and indifference determined the bank's decision to disregard the sensibilities of the Jewish nation.

On January 20 the boycott of Bank Leumi went into effect, signed by the ecclesiastical leaders of the Neturei Karta, Agudat Israel, Shas and tens of other rabbinical leaders. As an immediate result, hundreds of institutions and thousands of individuals severed their ties with the bank and transferred their accounts from Bank Leumi, withdrawing hundreds of millions of dollars from the bank's assets. The bank management expressed their regret and admitted that this boycott was more effective and damaging than the Arab boycott on the Zionist state. The shares of the Africa-Israel corporation have declined in value with the constant stream of customer transfers, especially the lucrative accounts of foreign depositors. As an agreement between the sides in the dispute still seems to be remote, the monies still being retained in Bank Leumi by those not heeding the rabbinical boycott and ban appear to be in jeopardy.

As a result of the confrontation between the Jewish Orthodox community and the authorities who are sanctioning the desecration of Jewish values which brought about arrests and jail remands of those who demonstrated to uphold the honour of the Jewish nation, heavy material damage was inflicted on Bank Leumi branches by those concerned. Not only branches in the religious quarters of the country, such as those in Mea Shearim, Matesdorf, Ramat Eshkol, Bnei Brak, etc. but also those in the Arab quarters of East Jerusalem, Nablus, the Gaza Strip, etc. were affected. The latter accentuates a mutual reciprocity between the indigenous Orthodox Jewish populace (Neturei Karta) and the indigenous Palestinian Arab populace — concern for Jewish sensibilities and respect for Jewish sacredness, reciprocating Neturei Karta concern and respect for the rights of the Palestinian Arab nation, by desisting from trespassing on Palestinian territories occupied by the Zionists and from infringing on Palestinian sensibilities.

The Bank Leumi episode recalls a similar controversy in the "laurel" history of the self-appointed "custodians" of the Jewish nation. The chief rabbis employed by the Zionist establishment and their court declared that the Area "G" site on the city of David archaeological dig area of the Temple Mount is an ancient Jewish cemetery; therefore the continuation of the excavations is considered a desecration of a sacred sanctity and is forbidden. The Zionist establishment reversed the decision by referring the issue to the "High Court," which declared that "the state of Israel is not a Jewish state based on the *halacha* (Jewish law) but rather on Turkish and English secular law," and therefore the dig and desecration may continue. The NRP skull-capped mayor of Tiberias, Yigal Bibi, has just alloted another forty dunums to the hotel's property, which, in effect, sanctions the desecration of the cemetery site. How long can these "religious" appointees mask the true nature of the Zionist establishment and answer to their Jewish conciences?

If the Zionist establishment may use violence against residents of the occupied territories in order to assure and safeguard their hold on the territories they acquired by violence, one can readily understand the so-called "violent" step taken by the Jewish Orthodox in order to assure the safeguarding of the Torah and the sanctity of their forefathers' graves. Orthodox Jews and Palestinian Arabs were residing in the Holy Land amicably in tranquility until the "new immigrants" of Zionism began dominating these peoples through violence and wars. How can they possibly question the steps of Orthodox Jews to assure and safeguard their holy sites?

Just as a ministerial committee was set up to formulate a solution to the cemetery controversy in Tiberias, the police high brass called a special meeting in order to formulate plans to curb religious "violence" and avert an internal crisis between the secular and religious in the country. No one suggested that a committee be formed in order to guarantee and safeguard the elementary rights of those living under subjugation to the clique ruling the country and thus eliminate the necessity for ministerial committees and special meetings. Can it possibly be because the existing rule is reigning due to the forfeiting of the elementary rights of the land's residents? How can violence be curbed if violence sanctions the rule over the land and constitutes its *raison d'etre*? Time will tell. ●

Jenin Electricity Falls Under Israeli Control

by Sami Al-oudi

Jenin, the northernmost major city in the occupied West Bank, was connected to the Israeli electricity system last December — an event covered with a great deal of fanfare in the Israeli press. Jenin's 22,000 residents, however, felt only anger at the forced hook-up and and at the shut-down of the city's 28-year-old independent power station. The municipal council's role was thus reduced to that of a middleman who collects the monthly bill payments and transfers the money to the Israeli Electricity Company. The Israeli-appointed mayor, Abd al-Rahman Lahlouh, whom the authorities hand-picked to head the city, cooperated fully with the scheme. Jenin residents often complain that Lahlouh runs the city only in accordance with Israeli whims, and that he makes major decisions which touch on all Jenin residents without consulting them. "He only listens to his superiors, the Israeli authorities," said one municipal council member who was dismissed from his job when the elected municipal council was dissolved in 1982 by the Israelis. Lahlouh has also been known to take revenge on opponents by suspending municipal services to their homes.

Connecting Jenin to the Israeli grid cost the West Bank city more than US$40,000, all of which was raised by increasing taxes and municipal fees, and carried out under Israeli supervision. For example, fees on business licenses were raised, as were municipal taxes; garbage tax, for one, was raised from JD2 to JD13.

Under severe political pressure and the threat of a shut-off of electric and water supplies, Jenin residents kept a low profile about their opposition to the hook-up with the Israeli system. Many residents are reluctant to be quoted in the press, but most openly express their feelings about the matter. "We had a good power station which needed very few spare parts," said Rashid al-Jamal, a municipal accountant who has been on strike since 1982 in protest of the military's dismissal of the council. Riyad Tamish, one of the sacked municipal council members, said there was no reason to link with the Israeli electric grid, especially since the municipal council had recently bought a new generator for JD156,000.

Residents say Israeli electricity offers no particular advantage over that supplied by their own power company. Electric fees remained unchanged at JD.07 per kilowatt. On the contrary, residents say some neighbourhoods in Jenin and the adjacent Jenin refugee camp now receive electric current that is so weak they are unable to operate even a TV set. "Our lights became as dim as candles," one youth from Jenin refugee camp told *Al Fajr*. He explained that florescent lights do not turn on at all.

Local residents argue that the municipal funds spent on the electricity cross-over could have been used to buy equipment and improve conditions in Jenin's only hospital, often called a "stable." Tamish said that even though the hospital is run by the government — a function taken over from Jordan by Israeli military authorities in 1967 — the dearth of government interest and the consequent lack of funds affects all residents. Tamish also listed a number of other local priorities — revamping the aged and deteriorating electrical network, paving roads and laying sidewalks — as more immediate needs than the somewhat superfluous connection with the Israeli power company, a move no one in the city favoured.

Lahlouh, the Israeli-appointed mayor, quelled protests against the scheme by selectively disconnecting electric services of disgruntled and vocal residents. Within one week, between January 15 to 22, more than 10 houses and businesses in the city were blacked out under different false pretexts, including not paying their bills or failing to connect with the sewage system, which is still under construction. They included two members of the dissolved municipal council. Neither is known as an outspoken opponent of the appointed mayor, but they are not on good terms. Former municipal accountant al-Jamal publicly voiced his opposition to the electric connection to Israel TV early this month. Al-Jamal's electric and water supplies were disconnected shortly thereafter. Some of the homes remained without electricity only a few days, some a week and one as long as two weeks.

Jenin and the adjacent refugee camp have depended on the municipal power company for their energy needs since 1957. The power station, one of the first to be established in the West Bank, consisted of four diesel generators with a total electrical output of 1.5 megawatts. Until four years ago, the municipal council was able to keep pace with increasing electricity needs and to maintain the station through regular upkeep.

In 1980, the municipal council clashed with Israeli occupation authorities in their first direct confrontation over electricity when the council applied to the West Bank military headquarters for a permit to buy and install a new generator. Councilperson Tamish said that the Israelis did not want to issue a permit. "The Israelis simply refused to respond to our application, even though we inquired about it several times," Tamish told *Al Fajr*.

Since 1980 the Israelis honed in on municipal councils throughout the West Bank, aborting development projects and virtually all municipal requests. The pressure had two purposes: to create Palestinian dependence on Israel in all spheres of life and to force local authorities to cooperate with the Israeli "civil administration," the military occupation's "white face" which was being formed at that time.

Irritated by the inexplicably long wait, the municipal council decided to buy the generator without waiting any longer for prior Israeli approval. The council, then under the mayorship of Ahmad Shawqi al-Mahmoud, signed a contract with Jado'un Hardware Company in Ramallah to import the generator from England. The generator had an output capacity of 1.5 megawatts, which, along with the city's old generators, would have accommodated both the city and the neighbouring refugee camp with their energy needs for the next ten years.

The municipal council agreed to a down payment of JD126,000 in cash, with the remaining JD30,000 to be paid upon delivery.

But the generator was never delivered. It was kept at Jado'un's warehouse in Ramallah after the Israeli authorities had forbidden the municipal council to install it.

بلدية جنين

مصلحة الكهرباء

اتفاقية لتوريد الكهرباء

Jenin Municipality Electricity Department.

> "The Israeli electricity offers no particular advantage over that supplied by their own company.

By the end of 1981, the Israeli civil administration was in place in the occupied territories; municipal councils boycotted it on the grounds that it was a facade, the first step in Israeli efforts to implement the dreaded autonomy plan. As a result, more than nine municipal councils and mayors, including Jenin's, were summarily sacked for refusing to deal with the Israeli civil administration. A national uprising erupted and Jenin's electric generator remained in the Ramallah warehouse.

Not until the Israeli authorities appointed a municipal committee to administer city affairs six months later was the generator able to be claimed. But by then, it was superfluous to Israeli plans since the new municipal committee had agreed to hook the city to the Israeli electric grid. The fate of the JD156,000 generator in the hands of the new municipal committee is not known. Some residents say the committee simply squirreled it away in a municipal warehouse until such time as they can resell it. Lahlouh, however, answers "nosey people" that the engine was "no good" and that it had many defects — leading some to speculate that it has already been sold and the money pocketed.

Council member Tamish, who also owns and runs a clothing store in a new shopping centre in central Jenin, said the decision to hook Jenin to the Israeli electric grid was taken by Lahlouh's predecessor, the first Israeli appointee, Shihab Sanouri. Sanouri, who was notorious for his use of muscle-man tactics to handle city affairs and for his collaborationist relations with the Israeli authorities, eventually lost his post in early 1984 because of his flagrantly lawless style. On numerous occasions, Sanouri and his sons, well-equipped with Israeli-issued firearms, threatened political opponents at gunpoint, chased and arrested demonstrators and shut off electricity and water supplies to those who refused to work under the appointed municipal committee or who criticised its activities. One such unfortunate was Jenin resident Nidal Abd al-Fattah Obeidi, who was beaten up at gunpoint by Lahlouh's sons in May 1983.

Israel's efforts to exert direct control over West Bank and Gaza electricity have been an integral part of its pursuit, since 1967, of economic annexation of the occupied territories. The Israelis employed all kinds of pressure tactics toward this end, including refusing to allocate funds for improvements in electric services and using puppet mayors to force hooking with the Israeli grid. The Gaza Strip's three major municipalities — which used to supply electricity through independent power stations — were connected with the Israeli electric grid shortly after 1967. This was facilitated by deteriorating and inefficient electricity generating systems. Refugee camps still depend on privately-run generators.

In the West Bank, Qalqilya, a small northwestern town (made smaller by Israeli confiscation of two-thirds of its land), was the first to be connected with the Israeli electric grid. In 1971, under great financial strain, the city had no alternative energy source but the Israeli grid. Hebron, the second largest city in the West Bank, followed suit in 1973. Plans had been on the boards before 1967 to add the Hebron region to the concession area of the Palestinian-run Jerusalem Electricity Company (JEC), the largest power company in the West Bank. The Israeli invasion of the West Bank disrupted these plans and left the city vulnerable to Israeli designs. In 1974, Tulkarm was made to connect to the Israeli electric grid under similar circumstances.

The Israeli electricity network gradually extended to the central West Bank region, the Jerusalem-Ramallah area and the Nablus district. In 1979, the Israelis tried through various means — nationalisation, outright takeover and a legal struggle in the High Court — to appropriate the JEC and annex its vast concession area. These plans were foiled by the united stand of workers and

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After 4 Years

Israelis Approve New Hospital for Hebron

After a four-year delay, Israeli authorities recently approved the construction of a 300-bed hospital for the Hebron district. This approval has been linked to efforts by Arab and Jewish American businessmen and to Israeli government statements about raising the quality of life for Palestinians in the occupied territories. Applications for a hospital, a bank and a cement factory have been pending for several years, but so far the hospital is the only project to be approved.

Said al-Ghazali interviewed medical personnel in Hebron and submitted this report about the Ahli (Family) Hospital project and the general medical situation in the occupied territories.

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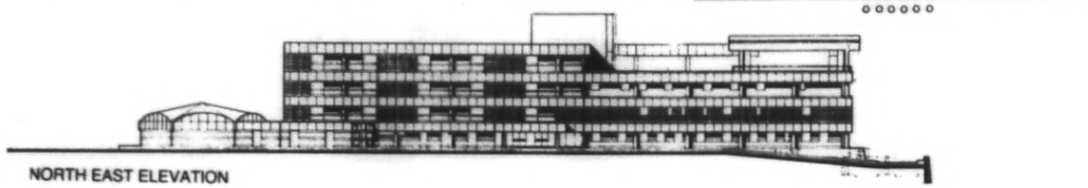
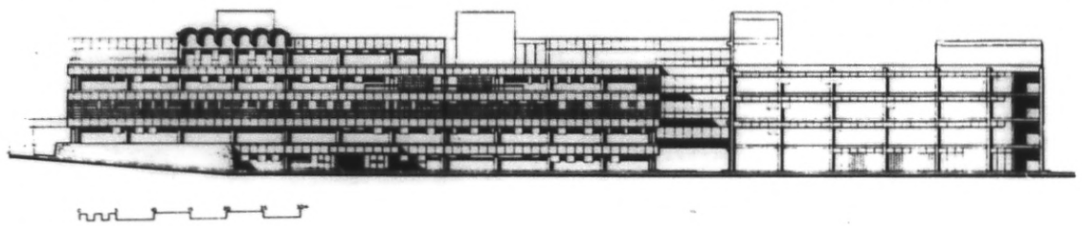


NORTH EAST ELEVATION



NORTH WEST ELEVATION

Planned external design for two wings of the new Ahli Hospital.

"Since the days of British mandatory rule, the construction of a well-equipped, highly sophisticated hospital in Hebron district has been a dream far beyond any Hebronite's reach," Dr Hafiz Abd al-Nabi Natshe, chairperson of the Patient's Friends Society (PFS) in Hebron told *Al Fajr*. "However, after preliminary approval was received from Israeli authorities on January 6, this dream finally seemed about to come true," Natshe added.

The approval for building a hospital in Hebron was not easy to obtain, however The original application for a licence submitted in January of 1981 went unanswered for four years. "We re studying it " was always the response. Only after a group of heavyweight American Jewish and Arab businessmen became interested in the project did the Israelis suddenly approve it.

Many West Bankers have reservations about the political implications behind the publicly-touted Israeli government intention to "raise the quality of life in the occupied territories " They point to the fact that two other proposed projects with greater consequences for economic independence — a bank and a cement factory — were not approved. Nonetheless, Hebronites involved in the hospital project feel it is too vital to give up for political reasons They decided to join this effort to improve the medical situation in the occupied territories while remaining alert for efforts to use the permission as a lever to extract political compromises on issues they feel are vital to their integrity and national identity.

So now the hospital will be built, barring any last-minute hitches. While written permission for the project has been received, approval of the plans themselves has yet to come through. Each and every detail of the planned hospital must first be scrutinised by Israeli officials and approved. It is not known how long this may take.

As conceived by the planners, the hospital is indeed an ambitious project. After careful investigation and design, the PFS submitted an application in January of 1981 to the military authorities for permission to build the 300-bed al-Ahli Hospital.

Dr Natshe said that according to standards set by developed countries, the Hebron district population of 200,000 requires about 500 beds." He added: "The only government hospital in Hebron has a mere 100 beds and lacks essential medical and surgical facilities." PFS officials stressed the great need for such a modern hospital.

Hebron's only existing medical facility the 100-bed Alia government-run hospital, lacks medical specialisations and basic services. Hebronites have long complained about the poor medical treatment provided by the hospital in an area which has no private hospitals to take up the slack. They cited statistics showing that more than 25 percent of hospital patients in Bethlehem, Jerusalem and Ramallah are from the Hebron area

Dr Natshe told *Al Fajr*, "As soon as we receive the detailed permission, construction bids will be submitted in public and delegations will be sent abroad for medical and administrative training." In the initial phase, Ahli Hospital will have 200 beds. The remaining 100 beds will be added in the second stage after completion of the first stage which is expected to take three years.

Preparations

The Patient's Friends Society was established in June 1976 as a result of a meeting for district medical personnel organised by the Hebron municipality. At the meeting, doctors and pharmacists from the Hebron area focused attention on the health and medical services that the Hebron district sorely lacked. It was decided that the Patient's Friends Society should focus its efforts on improving the situation.

Dr Natshe told *Al Fajr*: "The most pressing need for Hebron residents was for medical diagnosis. Therefore the PFS established a medical centre in 1977 which houses a medical lab, an X-ray unit, an internal medicine clinic, a dental clinic and a blood bank. "Since then," Natshe continued, "we have convened several conferences in which engineers and doctors gave reports about the hospital project. These were then submitted to an engineering company in Amman. A contract was signed with Jouzy and Partners, a company which cooperates with the British company ACP (Architects Co-Partnership). According to the PFS officials, engineers from both companies visited the site designated for the hospital and approved its position.

Dr Awni Zaghair, a PFS member, told *Al Fajr*, "The establishment of a modern hospital was our main goal. We have already spent at least JD80,000 on the project. It will provide jobs for more than 650 people."

After submitting the project to Israeli military officials in Beit El occupation headquarters, Israeli authorities completely ignored the project. The PFS officials kept urging Israeli authorities to answer their demands. On December 16, 1984, the PFS were verbally notified about the authorities' approval in principle for the construction of a hospital and on January 6, Beit El officials sent written approval. However, PFS planners cannot start implementing their project until the technical aspects and details are studied and scrutinised by Israeli hospitals. The planners must now obtain a building licence from military authorities and discuss the final number of beds permitted the hospital.

Architectural Design

The architectural report describes the planned hospital as a five-storey building totalling 27,514 square metres for the main building and the attached service building. It will be constructed in the Abu Ktaila area atop a hill, in an area that enjoys a pleasant climate year-round.

The position of the hospital has been determined by modern architectural criteria so it faces all directions and provides separate entrances for emergency cases, visitors, outpatients, delivery services and refuse collection. It is also designed to leave open the possibility of later expansion.

The location of various divisions and departments in the hospital has been tailored to medical requirements. For instance, the Infectious Diseases Unit is located on the lowest floor away from other areas, where it can be directly accessed from outside as well as being linked to the internal circulation system of the hospital. The outpatient clinics are located at the main entrance level and the objective has been to simplify the circulation routes through this department for patients. Antenatal and blood donor services are positioned as separate units close to the main entrance concourse. Lifts, stairs and ramps are used to facilitate movement.

The Friends of the Patient Society has already opened new medical laboratories in Hebron under their supervision to facilitate health care in the area.

Medical Facilities

In addition to the four main departments found in every hospital (internal medicine, general surgery, obstetrics and gynaecology and pediatrics), the hospital will include specialised surgery, orthopaedics, neurology, cardiovascular and cardiology, a burn unit, and both child and adult intensive care units (see table).

Funding

PFS officials received promises from Saudi Arabia, Arab Gulf states, the Washington-based Jerusalem Fund, the Islamic Conference and the Kuwaiti Alms-Giving Fund to cover the estimated cost of JD4-6 million for the hospital. Wealthy Hebronites and private charitable organisations from various countries will also share in the expenses. Mahmoud Tamimi, deputy chairperson of the Patient's Friends Society, told *Al Fajr* that the US-based ANERA organisation (American Near East Refugee Aid) offered to contribute JD500,000. "Arab-American businessmen will cover expenses for consultations with the US development company Humana," Tamimi told *Al Fajr*.

The Israeli decision to approve the construction of the Ahli Hospital in Hebron was preceded by a number of meetings between the Hebron PFS and a group of Arab and Jewish American businessmen who "asserted pressure on Israeli authorities to issue a positive answer on the construction of Ahli Hospital," said Mahmoud Tamimi.

Israelis later linked the go-ahead to official declarations about improving the "quality of life" in the occupied territories, as long as money came from non-political sources. Yitzhak Rabin, Israeli defence minister, told Knesset members that he would approve "the transfer of funds not from a terrorist organisation but from an Arab country or from an international source for the agreed development projects for citizens' welfare." It is believed that the issue of construction of Ahli Hospital is related to a West Bank medical delegation's current tour of US hospitals.

The US Information Agency has invited six West Bank doctors to tour American community hospitals to get acquainted with the medical facilities and procedural routines in local hospitals. The six doctors, two of whom are PFS members, will contact officials in US hospitals, universities and charitable organisations to obtain scholarships for training Ahli heads of sections and to consult on equipment for the hospital. The doctors are due to leave on February 10 for a one-month stay. The delegation was chosen to represent medical organisations including the PFS and the Red Crescent Society. Jihad Owaiwe, chairperson of the Red Crescent Society, Hafiz Abd al-Nabi Natshe and Mahmoud Tamimi are among the delegates.

Dr Haider Abd al-Shafi, head of the Red Crescent Society in the Gaza Strip expressed support for the new hospital in Hebron. He termed it "a desirable demand." Al-Shafi told *Al Fajr*: "The Israeli administration's approval of the Hebron hospital project has motivated us to demand that the Israelis rescind their ban on building a new 200 bed hospital in Gaza." In 1979, Israeli authorities refused to permit the Gaza Red Crescent Society to build a hospital. But Abd al-Shafi told *Al Fajr* that Gaza urgently needs at least 800 additional beds. "I am going to contact Israeli authorities and demand their approval for constructing our hospital," Abd al-Shafi said.

Health Care in the Occupied Territories

Palestinian residents in the West Bank and Gaza Strip usually depend on government hospitals, which lack important medical and technical facilities. The private hospitals — which lack laboratories — also cannot reach the level of sophistication found in Israeli hospitals.

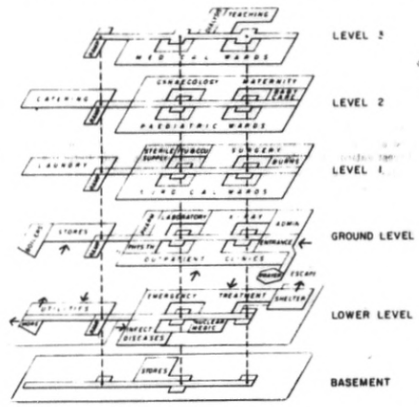
"The solution for the medical crisis now evident in the occupied territories," Dr Haider Abd al-Shafi told *Al Fajr*, "is not to build a completely new medical infrastructure." Rather, he argues, Palestinians should demand that medical standards in government hospitals be improved and they should also make sure that private and charitable hospitals are equipped with all the facilities they require.

Dr Mahmoud Tamimi criticised the general medical situation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip: "There is a common error here — medical doctors are appointed to run affairs of hospitals instead of specialists. There are no full-time specialists in the government hospitals There are only unqualified doctors who lack training because they are underpaid. The qualified doctors leave and open private clinics. Hospitals must be provided with firm regulations and their budgets must be expanded. The village clinics must be transformed into complete medical centres. It is the government's duty to improve the medical situation in the occupied territories."

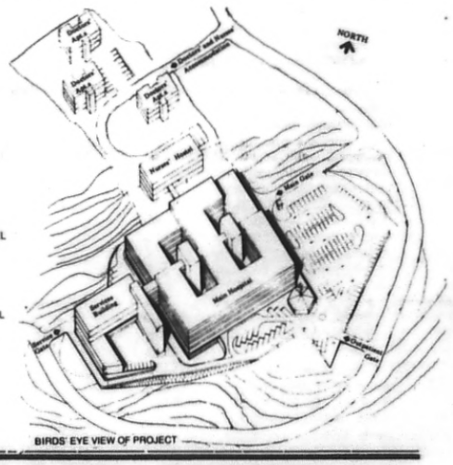
Jihad Owaiwe, chairperson of the Red Crescent Society in Hebron, refused to read much political significance into the project although he agreed the Israelis should have licensed the Hebron hospital long ago. Perhaps by endorsing this project the Israelis think they can improve the impression abroad of deteriorating medical conditions in Hebron. Owaiwe explained that international societies, and those concerned with raising the standards of health care in the occupied territories, influenced Israeli authorities to issue a licence for the hospital. "Why are Israeli authorities still refusing to license the establishment of the cement factory in Hebron if they are truly concerned with raising the quality of life in the occupied territories?" he asked rhetorically.

Dr Hamzeh Natshe, chairperson of the Hebron Medical Relief Committee, is skeptical about the hospital project. He questioned Israeli authorities' refusal to license the hospital proposed by the Red Crescent Society in Gaza. He further expressed fears that if West Bank institutions receive funds from American organisations the US influence on these institutions will rise. Hamzeh Natshe told *Al Fajr* that he feels the burden of improving the medical infrastructure in the occupied territories is mainly the responsibility of the Israeli authorities.

In December 1984, the Israeli administration also gave the go-ahead for a specialised medical care centre in Ramallah. The approval was officially granted to the Medical Care Society, whose chairperson, Issa Salti, also heads the government hospital in Ramallah. According to Hamzeh Natshe, Salti is not hiding the fact US funds were donated for the medical centre. He expressed fears that accepting American funds for development projects could open the door for pressure in the future to accept an imposed political solution like Camp David, autonomy or the Jordanian choice. Hamzeh Natshe expressed hope that those West Bank institutions who are ready to cooperate with American businessmen will remain steadfast, withstand pressure and avoid political booby-traps. ●



FUNCTIONAL DIAGRAM



BIRDS' EYE VIEW OF PROJECT

"THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A MODERN HOSPITAL WAS OUR MAIN GOAL. WE HAVE ALREADY SPENT AT LEAST JD 80,000 ON THE PROJECT. IT WILL PROVIDE JOBS FOR MORE THAN 650 PEOPLE."

The Plan for Ahli Hospital

1. General Surgery — 68 beds.
2. Internal Medicine — 64 beds.
3. Paediatrics — 52 beds.
4. Gynaecology and Obstetrics — 36 beds.
5. Baby Intensive Care Unit — 12 beds.
6. Emergency and One Day Ward — 12 beds.
7. Infectious Diseases — 12 beds.
8. Intensive Care Unit — 10 beds.
9. Burn Unit — 10 beds.
10. Neurosurgery — 10 beds.
11. Renal Dialysis — 4 beds.
12. Physiotherapy — not yet determined.
13. Outpatient Clinics, Theatres, Central Sterilising Unit

Bir Zeit Syposium Discusses Political - Academic Life

by Awad Abdel Fattah

On January 30, politics and academic life was the subject of a symposium organised by Bir Zeit University. The symposium was generated by an article published in the Israeli daily *Al Hamishmar* allegedly quoting a member of the university's public relations department as saying that there should be separation between politics and academic life. The implication made by the newspaper was that Bir Zeit students tend to concentrate on politics at the expense of academics.

In the symposium, attended by about 200 students, four lecturers gave short talks about the issue raised. The speakers were Sari Nusseibi, a philosophy professor, Albert Agazarian, head of public relations, Tamer Issawi, head of the university employees' union, and Ali Jerbawi, head of the Middle East studies department.

Nusseibi reviewed the relationship between academic and political life and said that relations between the two have been strong and inseparable throughout history. Plato, he pointed out, was the first to isolate an institution under the name "academic," literally meaning politics and education. His motive was political, said Nusseibi, namely to educate the Greeks to become aware participants in political life. Since then and up to now, there has been an inseparable communion of academic life with politics, on a practical level.

Nusseibi went on to say that research on any subject is related to financial matters, that is, the research undertaken by a university or other academic institution is necessarily bound up with the financial backing it receives [or doesn't receive] from the existing political establishment. "If this relationship exists, how should we use it to benefit our people?" he questioned. The academic institution's role is to mould students into aware, proud and questioning adults, and to be creative in both the academic and political spheres.

PR director Albert Agazarian approached the subject differently. Pointing out that he was misquoted by *Al Hamishmar*, he stressed the relationship between politics and the academic life. "I don't want to talk about theories, we need practice," was how he opened his speech. He was critical of students for, in his opinion, always attacking the administration, attacks which he believed do not serve the future of the academic institution. "They would attack any administration, even if it were revolutionary, because they are oppressed and they want to relieve their tension."

Agazarian tried to downplay the role of students in revolutions. On this point he said, "It is not the students, although they are an important sector of the society, who make a revolution. For example, the activities of Palestinian students have continued for over six decades but they failed to bring about a revolution and they remained only a small social group with little actual political impact. The students are not the society. Whoever thinks that revolution occurs through the students is completely wrong. Look at the student movements in Europe in the 1960s — and yet no revolution occurred."

In summary, Agazarian said, "Any responsible nationalist Palestinian should realise that politics is the daily bread of the Palestinian. Nobody has the right to say that students should not interfere in politics while they are oppressed and their basic and national rights are confiscated. But no student should concentrate solely on politics at the expense of his academic future."

Tamer Issawi, the employees' union head, defended the students' role in society and political revolutionary struggle, admitting that students alone do not make a revolution possible. "It is no accident," he said, "that the leaders of national liberation movements are members of the educated sector. The universities have an important role in political life, first because they are a meeting place for people of different backgrounds who can then interact together. Secondly, universities are organised centres with their students, employees and administrations."

Issawi contradicted Agazarian on the point of student revolutionary participation by saying that students have always played an influential role in national resistance, and cited the situation in Egypt in the 1930s and 1940s. He added, "Being under occupation, we should reinforce the relationship between politics and the academic process, but we should find the proper route so that one does not come at the expense of the other, in order to create the academic and the nationalist in one because an academic without a homeland has no value."

Bir Zeit students, he said, interact with their society through literacy programmes and other voluntary community activities which they organise, as well as through "their role in resisting occupation — which is known to everybody."

Unlike Agazarian and the other lecturers, Issawi did not view it as a major loss "if sometimes the political struggle clashes with the academic process. When there are important events in the Palestinian arena," he explained, "the students cannot be expected to be indifferent or silent. They have to respond and express their views as part of their national duty. And here the university administration should not be critical of the students. Sometimes there is a need to pay an academic price as long as this contributes to the national struggle."

Political scientist Ali Jerbawi focused on the issue of planning. He was critical of the university administration for what he called the absence of clarity in the goals of academic institutions in the occupied territories. He said that university teaching programmes should be revised or tailored to reflect the Palestinian reality. "The goal," he said, "of the academic institutions should be made clear by formulating a plan for producing effective and productive people."

With regard to student political activity, he said they should not respond to Israeli actions against the population but they should interact with society and provide services which the Palestinian society needs. "Then the students will be able to perform their role without clashing with the academic process," he concluded.

Despite the four different approaches to the subject of discussion, the symposium itself was a good response to the *Al Hamishmar* article. If the purpose was to create conflict between the students and their teachers by demonstrating that teachers oppose the students' political and national role, then the paper failed. The seminar reinforced the relationship between politics and academia. ●

New Local Plan for Health Care Fund

A socialised Palestinian health fund is becoming increasingly necessary in the occupied territories as costs of available medical and commercial insurance plans skyrocket. Maher AbuKhater talked to local health professionals and found that they have an ambitious plan to tackle this problem.

Soaring medical costs in Israel and the occupied territories — which nowadays can consume a whole month's middle income salary for two or three nights in hospital — have prompted Palestinian health professionals in the occupied territories to start thinking about establishing a special health insurance plan.

Veteran general practitioner and head of the West Bank Federation of Charitable Associations in Jerusalem Dr Amin Khatib is one of the doctors behind the idea. "A health insurance fund which all sectors of the Palestinian population in the West Bank and Gaza could afford is an urgent need," Dr Khatib told *Al Fajr*. "Continually rising medical costs will force every Palestinian household to have some kind of health insurance coverage." Presently existing commercial insurance companies demand high premium fees, so not everyone can afford them. The proposed fund, on the other hand, is expected to be affordable for most wage-earners.

As in the Israeli *Kupat Holim* system, Dr Khatib's health insurance project would require that special hospitals and clinics be set up throughout the West Bank and Gaza to serve the health needs of those who participated in the fund. According to Dr Katib's plan, the central hospital would not contain any private or semi-private rooms but only large wards where all patients would receive free treatment on an equal basis.

A few sites for the planned fund hospital are under consideration. The private charitable Maqassed Hospital on Jerusalem's Mount of Olives is one. However, because of differences in opinion with the backers of the proposed insurance fund, Maqassed's management refused to have anything to do with it. The initiators are currently looking into the possibility of transforming the Hospice Hospital in the Old City of Jerusalem into the central "sick fund" hospital. The Hospice is a government-run hospital which is facing serious financial problems due to the severe economic situation and the government's inability to pay its share of the budget. If something is not done, the Hospice may have to close down.

In light of these facts, Dr Khatib suggested that the Hospice be made into a health centre. Only one major problem remains unresolved: finding funds. Dr Khatib hopes that they will soon be able to raise enough money to start a health centre at the Hospice, if possible, or in a totally new location.

One special health insurance plan already exists in the West Bank, but only on a limited scale. It was started by some of the local labour and professional unions, and they are the primary subscribers. Under the existing plan, members go to specific physicians and local hospitals. They pay a small union membership fee which includes insurance coverage. So far, not many unions subscribe to this fund.

Not many workers' unions have joined the existing Palestinian health insurance plan since many of the workers are already members of the Israeli *Kupat Holim*. The *Kupat Holim* fees are automatically deducted from the wages of Jerusalem Arab workers as part of their social security tax. Palestinian workers from the rest of the West Bank and Gaza are not eligible for *Kupat Holim*. Those who have insurance receive free medical treatment at different *Kupat Holim* clinics and at the Israeli government Hadassah Hospital.

One big problem with this system is that Hadassah medical staff are predominantly Jewish and a large percentage of them do not speak Arabic. On a recent visit to Hadassah, this reporter saw at least one Arab patient in the emergency ward who had a difficult time communicating with the physician and nurses on duty. The patient, who had injured his leg, was not able to speak Hebrew or any other foreign language. He was left in a corner for a long time until he was dragged to X-ray. The patient told *Al Fajr* that he also had a hard time communicating with the staff on duty at the admitting desk about hospital fees.

In order to solve the problem of increasingly frequent visits by Arab patients to government-subsidised Israeli hospitals — which are far better equipped than government-run hospitals in Arab areas due to Israeli government restrictions and minimal financing — the Israeli government recently inaugurated a *Kupat Holim* centre in the Sheikh Jarah area of East Jerusalem to serve all Arab *Kupat Holim* members in Jerusalem. The new centre was originally intended to be staffed only with Arab professionals. However both Arab and Jewish physicians and nurses were hired in the end. According to one family who recently visited Sheikh Jarah, communications is still a problem and sometimes they had to ask nurses to act as translators with physicians if the latter was an Israeli who did not understand Arabic. The centre is only a clinic, so patients who need intensive treatment are still referred to Israeli hospitals.

Dr Amin Khatib hopes his proposed Arab-run sick fund and health centre will provide an alternative to the Israeli clinics for all West Bank and Gaza Palestinians. He hopes the new insurance fund he has in mind will become as popular as the Israeli *Kupat Holim* is in

continued on page 13

A Slippery Spot

The following short story, *The Slippery Spot* by **Ghassan Kanafani**, tackles the theme of class conflict in the Palestinian environment. **Kanafani**, a teacher and militant revolutionary, fought all his life against all kinds of injustice. He was assassinated in Beirut by Israeli agents in 1972.

The Slippery Spot looks at the mature social consciousness and great potential for imagination possessed by the boy, who was able to narrate his father's story through different versions. The headmaster was unable to understand the power behind this imagination or even to accept it.

"I am not crazy. Go to the palace owner and examine his shoes. You will find my father's flesh on them. Perhaps you will find his eyes or nose in one of the shoes. Go there."

****

Teacher Muhsen trudged slowly and heavily along the corridor leading to his classroom. It was his first teaching experience and he was uncertain of what to do after he entered the classroom. He had tried his best to delay this inevitable moment.

He had spent the previous night thinking about this dilemma. It is not easy for an inexperienced person to stand up before students and teach them. "Who are you to do this job?" he asked himself. "You lived your miserable life without learning from others. Do you really believe that you can teach students what is or is not useful for them? You yourself believe that school is the last place to give lessons on life. However, you are now a teacher.

"In the morning, you geared yourself up and went to the headmaster's office. There you sat with other teachers and listened to discussions about education and regulations..."

"What can we do in the classroom if there are no textbooks?"

The headmaster answered tersely, in a nasal tone, "Any capable teacher can make good use of time, despite the absence of texbooks." Then he said rudely, "Ask a student to fill the time for you if you fail to..."

Muhsen said to himself: "This is the kind of headmaster who wants from the very first moment to teach us a lesson about the 'system' and obedience. After he received the tuition fees last week, he only wanted to get at our souls." He slurped his tea and stood up.

The long route was full of the clamour of students. Teacher Muhsen continued walking with his heavy step, but felt that he was entering a whirlwind leading to an unpleasant future full of noise and absurdity and little else.

"I have a nice story, teacher," a boy crumpled in the last seat said, offering a proper solution to the confusion. Before teacher Muhsen could respond to the proposal, the boy left his seat and stood up before his classmates in his too-short and too-wide trousers and an old shirt made for women, thick black hair obscuring his eyebrows.

"My father was a good man... His hair was white and he accidentally lost an eye while repairing a big old shoe. He had been eager to punch holes in the shoes with his big cobbler's needle. The shoe was very strong. He exerted all his energy on the task and pressed the needle harder and harder, but without luck. He lifted the shoe and rested it on his chest and then pressed again with all his strength. Suddenly the needle went through the side of shoe and straight into his eye.

"My father was a good man. His beard was neither long nor short. He worked hard all his life and he always had piles of old shoes which needed to be repaired. My father had no proper shop and nobody offered him any kind of help. His shop was a box made of wood, a sheet of tin and cardboard. There was no room except for him, his nails, shoes and an anvil. There was not even room left over for a fly. The customer usually stood barefoot outside this box-shop.

"The shop was fixed on a slope next to a rich man's palace. The grass grew tall on the hill and my father did not fear being discovered by the palace owner and kicked out from his refuge. The palace owner was not in the habit of leaving his comfortable castle since his servants brought him whatever he needed or desired. The palace servants made a deal with my father that if he repaired their shoes for free, they would keep the shop a secret.

"My father was determined and energetic in his job. People discovered that he was a skilled cobbler and they sent him more shoes to repair every day. He spent his whole day and most of the night at work. Whenever my mother protested, he would tell her: 'Tomorow, our children will go to school.' My mother would asnwer: 'Then your burden will be light.' "

The child returned to his seat. However, his classmates did not applaud him. Teacher Muhsen asked them, "Why didn't you clap for your classmate's story? Didn't you like it?"

"We want to know the end," one boy said.

"Is there an end?" another queried.

The boy stood up again and responded: "Once my father, ever so busy, was unable to return home. My mother told me that he had no time since he was working day and night without any rest. The rich man spent most of his time eating bananas, oranges and almonds and tossing fruit peels from his palace balcony out onto the hill slope. One day the hill was full of fruit refuse. My father was so busy at work that he did not pay attention to the accumulation of peels on his shop roof. I believe that he died there."

The children clapped. The boy took his seat and 60 shining eyes focused on the teacher.

Muhsen took the boy to the headmaster's office. On the way he asked him, "Are you sure your father is dead?"

"My father will never die but I said that as an end to the story. I will never end it in months and months. The sun will rise and the fruit peels will dry and my father will pick them up and return home."

Teacher Muhsen arrived at the office and addressed the headmaster: "I discovered a genius. He is wonderful. Let him tell you the story of his father."

"What is the story of your father?"

"My father has a very small shoe shop and he is a skilled cobbler. One day his reputation spread to a palace owner who sent him all his old shoes to repair. All his servants were busy for two days moving shoes to the small shop. When they finished, my father had suffocated under the piles of shoes."

The headmaster put his thumb in his vest pocket and thought for a moment. "This is a crazy boy," he said. "We should send him to another school."

The boy replied, "I am not crazy. Go to the palace owner and examine his shoes. You will find my father's flesh on them. Perhaps you will find his eyes or nose in one of the shoes. Go there."

The headmaster insisted, "I believe he is crazy."

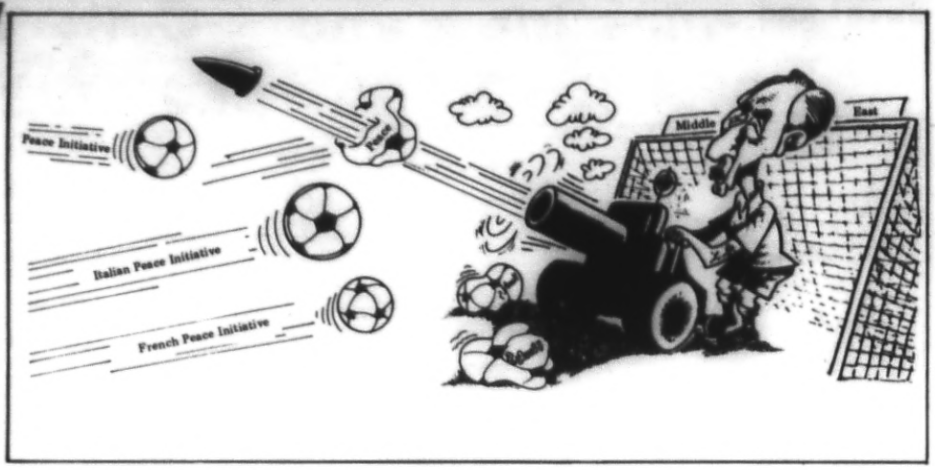
Teacher Muhsen replied, "He is not crazy. I myself repaired my shoes there once. When I returned a second time, I was told that the old man had died."

"How did he die?"

"He was repairing an old shoe that day and he hammered many nails into it. When he finished, he found he had nailed the shoe to the anvil and caught his fingers between them. He hadn't realised he was strong enough to hammer his nails into the iron anvil. When he tried to stand up, he could not. He was firmly attached to the anvil. Passers-by refused to help him. He was stuck to the place until he died."

The headmaster stared at the teacher, who stood there next to the boy as if they were one body, and shook his head several times. He sat down in his plush seat and began to read his papers. From time to time he stole glances at teacher Muhsen and the boy. (Translation: Al Ittihad, August 15, 1984) ■

WINDOW ON THE ARAB PRESS



The hard-hitting attacks against Israeli troops in Lebanon, the Arafat-Hussein agreement and a commemoration for the late Fahd Qawasmeh 40 days after his death were the main stories covered in the local press this week.

Palestinian papers reported the escalating attacks in south Lebanon in which three Israeli soldiers were killed. A fourth soldier wounded in an earlier raid died from his wounds.

Local papers expressed a variety of reactions to the Arafat-Hussein accord. *Al Quds* daily pulled out its red ink to welcome the accord. *Al Fajr* quoted Arafat as saying that the record was in concert with UN and Arab summit resolutions. *Al Sha'ab*'s headline referred to a PLO executive member's statement that the PLO still opposd UN resolution 242.

The Washington Meeting

There is great Arab and international interest in the upcoming meeting between King Fahd and President Reagan in Washington next Monday. Some circles have high expectations from this meeting. We'd like to have shared this interest and these expectations if two conditions had been met. First, Saudi Arabia should be interested in using its leverage with Washington. Second, Saudi Arabia must still have the oil and financial momentum it had in the seventies.

As for the first condition, we have seen that Saudi Arabia always tries to justify American stands. It did nothing more than request that water and electricity be allowed into West Beirut during the 1982 Israeli siege.

The second condition is no longer valid. The OPEC countries are paying the price of their past submission to the demands of the Western countries. Oil is no longer an effective weapon.

Reagan already offered what he could before King Fahd arrived in Washington. He offered generous aid to Israel. Consequently, there will be no change in the American position as a result of Fahd's visit. The change should occur in the Saudi position, and in the position of other Arab countries, before the Arab rulers start flocking to Washington.

AL SHA'AB
February 7

'Iron Fist' Policy

Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres affirms that there are no differences between Ma'rach and Likud regarding the hardline policy in the occupied territories. Sharon was not joking when he demanded the application of the deportation policy in the occupied territories, though not on the same large scale practised by the Ma'rach in the 1970s.

Rabbis Levinger and Kahane are certain that the present Israeli government will politically cover their actions in the occupied territories.

Hasn't Levinger's location near Dheisheh become an official political base in this "war"? It *is* war — according to the logic of the Israeli daily *Ma'ariv*.

AL FAJR
February 8

Autonomy Tranquilizers

Reports about the possibility of the Israelis implementing autonomy in the Gaza Strip are perhaps a test for Arab and Palestinian reactions. They do not indicate a real tendency to solve the Palestinian problem.

Autonomy resulted from the Camp David accords, which did not take Palestinian demands into consideration. Many previous attempts were made to implement autonomy in the Gaza Strip first, prior to implementing it in the West Bank. But Palestinian and Egyptian reactions to this step were not encouraging.

The revival of this idea at present does not come from Palestinian sources. A just solution cannot be achieved through the desire of one party. If Israel goes ahead with this step, it will only be repeating previous stands. It would be better if Israel took practical steps toward a comprehensive settlement instead of solutions.

AL QUDS
February 8

Fahd Qawasmeh is only a Figure in the Convoy

Nazareth hosts a memorial for the late Fahd al-Qawasmeh, whose death caused pain and grief for many reasons, namely:

The Palestinian cause is now, more than ever before, in need of sincere and good Palestinians who are seeking self-determination and statehood. With Fahd's death, the cause lost such a person.

His death was the result of sharp differences which caused some Palestinian factions to be dominated by certain Arab regimes. These factions have become a mere tool in the hands of these two regimes.

This martyr has won the respect and admiration of all those who came to know him. No one will ever forget his tours in the world calling for Palestinian rights. Fahd al-Qawasmeh will be one of those martyrs offered on the road toward achieving the goals of the Palestinian people.

AL FAJR
February 9

In Memory of Fahd Al-Qawasmeh

The murderers of Qawasmeh did not achieve their goals. They never will. No force in the world can wipe out the memory of the people, especially the Palestinian people. And no force can ever confiscate the people's dreams of independence. Those who thought that Qawasmeh's assassination would hinder the march discovered that they were mistaken and that the people will continue the march. When the murder was condemned, the Palestinian people were expressing a Palestinian tradition of appreciating their loyal and sincere leaders.

We will never forget Fahd al-Qawasmeh, who struggled for the cause of this, his own, people.

AL SHA'AB
February 9

Election Results

Results of the elections held recently in the various unions underscore the importance of Palestinian national unity represented by the PLO with its legitimate leadership.

It is necessary to link the results of elections in the occupied territories with the 17th PNC session in Amman. The results of these elections emphasise the failure of all attempts to perpetuate division among the ranks of our people. These results are not confined to the occupied territories. They include the whole Palestinian reality, everywhere. They form a clear indicator to those who still try to hinder the march of the people and try to create an alternative to the PLO. We are calling upon all to show more unity.

AL FAJR
February 11

Arab Pressure on the International Level

The Arab countries, separately or combined, have the economic and political capability of exerting pressure internationally. This capability has been put to use only once, in 1973.

Will these countries use their economic and political powers once more at present? We believe this possibility still exists. The most important factor in activating this potential is to define a clear Arab goal, which is now the convening of an international conference.

Arab agreement in this goal will help the Arab countries to put pressure on the US and Europe, through oil in particular. Without this agreement, the Arab-American meetings will have no effect.

AL FAJR
February 12

The Farce

The festivities are over in Syria after weeks of bringing life to a standstill to hold "spontaneous" demonstrations and gatherings in support of the regime. After all this, the Syrian people "practised democracy"... the Ba'athist-Assadist style. The result was predictable to all those who followed the festivities.

What happened in Syria was not a surprise to anyone except those who want to persuade themselves that the Assad regime is a progressive one. They are, at best, naive people. They are ignoring the changes that took place in Syria. Above all, they tend to forget the suspicious role being played by the Syrian regime in the Palestinian and Lebanese arenas. They tend to forget the fact that an anti-imperialist regime cannot be hostile to its own people at the same time.

The farce in Syria makes us feel more pain. We are ashamed when we see that other people manage to practise democracy, while our rulers still believe that they can concoct referendums and fake the opinion of their people. They all use the same ridiculous percentage, 99.97 percent.

AL SHA'AB
February 12

Gaza Land

Continued from page 4.

"From the Gaza Zaytun bloc I could see the Netzarim settlement, the coast and the city of Gaza. The farmers repeatedly stressed the fact that they had worked the land without hindrance under Ottoman, British and Egyptian rule. They are not sure what the occupation authorities want to do with their land; is it being expropriated to make way for a new settlement or to expand Netzarim? They believe that if the Zaytun and Abu Midan farmers are robbed of their land, the farmers of Bir Saba' — south of Wadi Gaza and east of the railroad line — will be next." (Translation: Report to the League for Civil and Human Rights, February 4, 1985)

WB Settlers

Continued from page 3.

cent accommodate 100-150 families and the other 7.5 percent of the settlements are city-settlements of more than 150 families.

By 1982, 58 percent of the settlers lived in settlements close to Jerusalem and Tel Aviv but inside the West Bank. By 1984 the number of suburban settlers rose to 71.5 percent. Of these, 41 percent live in settlements surrounding Jerusalem and 30.5 in the Tel Aviv area. Only 28.5 percent live in the West Bank mountain areas.

Of the settlers, 60 percent are "religious," the report said. Benvenisti projected that the number of settlers would reach 100,000 by the end of the 1980s, and 80 percent would live in the Jerusalem and Tel Aviv areas. He said both the Likud and Labour factions in the Israeli government agree on this principle.

Another report prepared by the Israeli Citizens' Rights Movement (CRM) and submitted February 14 to Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin documents official discrimination between Palestinians and Israelis in the occupied territories. One example reported that Jewish settlers in the southern areas of the West Bank were given 7000 telephone lines compared to only 260 lines for the whole Arab area, which has a population many times larger than the Jewish settlements.

The CRM report also warned that systemtic annexation of the occupied West Bank and Gaza is being facilitated by the growing dependence of these territories on the Israeli economy. It confirmed that this dependence is being caused by a planned policy of the Israeli government, which restricts growth of the Arab economy while giving more freedom to Israeli companies and farmers to market their products in the Arab areas.

According to the report, Arabs under occupation have been forbidden to dig new wells since 1967 while the government assisted Jewish settlers in the same areas to drill 20 deep-water sources.

The report in Rabin's hands also documents discrimination against Arabs in legal cases when one of the parties is Jewish. It further said Arabs who are convicted in military courts in the West Bank and Gaza do not have the right of appeal.

The report said Arab workers from the occupied areas who work in Israel receive lower wages in comparison with Israeli labourers doing the same work. The Arab workers also do not receive most of the benefits their Israeli counterparts get, like pensions, even though they pay the same amount of taxes, the report said.

It said a large number of requests by Arabs for family members living abroad to return had been denied. At the same time, Jews from all over the world can come and live in Israel and the occupied territories, according to the Israeli law of return.

As for freedom of assembly, the report said Arab institutions in the occupied lands have been regularly harassed and many of their activities restricted.

Arafat

continued from page 1

in which the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people are pushed aside.

Palestinians in the occupied territories also received the news with mixed reactions. Bethlehem Mayor Elias Freij and deposed Gaza Mayor Rashad Shawwa expressed their support right away. Later supporters included Karim Khalaf, the deposed mayor of Ramallah, Tulkarm Mayor Hilmi Hanoun, Qalqilya Mayor Amin Nasser, *Al Fajr* Editor-in-Chief Hanna Siniora and the head of one of the federations of West Bank unions, Shehadeh Minawi. Among those voicing opposition to the accord were elected Nablus and Anabta Mayors Bassam Shaka'a and Wahid Hamdallah, Gaza Red Crescent head Haidar Abd al-Shafi, *Al Talia* Arabic weekly Editor-in-Chief Bashir Barghouthi, and Bethlehem and al-Bireh municipal council members George Hazboun and Azmi Shouabi.

West Bank newspapers also received the agreement with varied reactions. *Al Fajr* and *Al Sha'ab* Arabic dailies cautiously supported the Arafat-Hussein agreement, stressing that PLO Chairman Arafat did not concede any legitimate Palestinian rights. The pro-Jordanian *Al Quds* daily supported the agreement, saying that priority must be given "to saving the land and the people before it is too late."

Al Mithaq daily and *Al Talia* weekly came out against the accord. *Al Talia* wrote that "regardless of Arafat's good intentions, the agreement will weaken the Palestinians and Arabs and will encourage the Americans to ask for more and more concessions."

Soon after the agreement was announced, Jordan's King Hussein and his entourage left Amman on an official three-day visit to Algiers. Middle East analysts believe the visit was aimed at obtaining Arab support for the Jordanian-Palestinian agreement. Algeria is considered to be neutral because it has good relations with all Arab states, including Syria and Libya — two countries that are bound to oppose the agreement. In Egypt, the agreement was overwhelmingly supported. Egyptian President Husni Mubarak, who is believed to have been instrumental in orchestrating the agreement, called it "a step forward in the right direction." The Syrian daily *Teshrin*, however, was scathing in its criticism: "The agreement is a planned plot to split the Arab world, to subdue it to imperialist control, to displace our Arab people, rob it of its wealth and control its resources." In Lebanon, *Al Nahar* daily newspaper supported the accord while *Al Safir* daily opposed it.

Israeli government officials did not pay the Jordanian-Palestinian agreement much attention or attribute it any importance. Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres refused to make any definitive statements and preferred to take a wait-and-see attitude. But Vice Premier and Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir (Likud) attacked the agreement. "If Hussein really desires peace with Israel, he should sever his contacts with Arafat." Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin echoed Shamir's sentiments, saying: "There is no sign that Arafat accepts UN resolution 242, abjures the path of terror or gives Hussein a mandate to negotiate with Israel." Deputy Premier David Levy felt that the agreement would not cause any crisis for the present Israeli government. He said that "the agreement means that they (Jordan and the PLO) intend to set up a PLO state in Judea and Samaria, something which we will do all we can to prevent because it endangers the very existence of the state of Israel."

In Washington, the announcement of the agreement did not produce any immediately apparent results in King Fahd's effort to revive American diplomatic intitiatives in the region and obtain US recognition of the PLO or the Palestinians' right to self-determination. After two days of apprehension, US President Reagan told reporters February 13 that he was "optimistic" about the agreement.

Withdrawal

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mistake. The conduct and outcome of the war has more than confirmed the validity of our initial opposition. It's not a question of political outlook — it's a matter of hard facts: the war didn't achieve anything. We've even set the Shi'ite community of Lebanon against us and they used to be our allies even back in the days of the *Shomer* [Zionist guards in the 1920's — tr]. We spilled blood for no reason and now we're withdrawing without anything having been accomplished. 'Milik's friends share his views. Emmnuel Ben Shalom who like Milik lost a son in 1973, said his piece: 'What's all the panic about? Why make statements about leaving Kiryat Shemona if a Katyusha is fired on the city? A statement like that is almost an open invitation to shell Kiryat Shemona."

The members of Kibbutz Dan agree that it is impossible to compare the living standards and community networks of Kibbutz Dan and Kiryat Shemona. 'But there is no reason in the world to make superfluous statements about fleeing from the north; they only encourage the terrorists. We must put our trust in the army,' said Baruch Fischer. "The army will defend the borders of Israel and take action against the terrorists if need be. But we should never have sought to gain control of a foreign country to esablish 'a new order.'"

Under Developed North

The one thing on which all the residents of the north agree is that over the past two years of relative tranquility, absolutely nothing has been done to prepare for the future — whether in regard to defence, economy or community welfare.

The mayor of Kiryat Shemona, Professor Ezran: "Two years have gone by and absolutely nothing was done. We failed to find an attentive ear to listen to ideas about financing industry or creating jobs. The same goes for defence, in spite of the promises that were made about years of peace and quiet. This neglect will boomerang. It's time that people realised that if the north lacks a viable economic infrastructure, the security of the state will suffer."

The members of Kibbutz Dan fully agree Milik said: 'These past two years should have been exploited. If conditions up here had improved, it would have been a shot in the arm for Kiryat Shemona. The same holds true for all the other communities on the border."

Marcus Hakon, a resident of Kiryat Shemona who has been unemployed for the past four months told me that if he didn't find a job he'd have to leave Kiryat Shemona with his family. 'But if I do find work' he said, 'I'll stay, even if there are Katyushas.' (Translation: Yediot Aharanot, Friday Supplement, January 18, 1985).

Health Care

continued from page 10

Israel — to become a universally accepted service to which every household subscribes. All union members and their families would be entitled to free medical treatment once the union joined the plan. Those who are insured would be able to go to specific clinics and to the central "sick fund" hospital for treatment.

Most importantly, the new insurance fund would provide free medical treatment, with low membership dues, to all segments of the Palestinian society, in contrast to the present situation where commercial Arab insurance companies cover only a limited portion of medical fees despite the relatively high premiums they charge. The Nablus based Arab Insurance Establishment pays an annual maximum of JD500 in doctor and hospital costs incurred for a JD50 fee per individual. For hospital coverage only, the premium is JD18.75. Another firm the Arab Insurance Agency a subsidiary of the British Lloyds Limited, gives hospital coverage of between US$1000 and US$10,000 only to subscribers who pay according to the individual's preference, at a premium of 3.5 percent of the amount of coverage.

Maternity 'Not Profitable

Starting this year all the insurance companies will cease providing maternity coverage. Until September 1984 the Arab Insurance Establishment for example, included maternity in its policy. But, according to company officials maternity became costly and 'less profitable." Each normal delivery costs between JD100-150 at West Bank hospitals. The Arab Insurance Establishment presumes that all new parents who use private hospitals can afford this sum. Those who cannot can turn to government hospitals, which are free of charge. According to Sami Nimr Establishment manager, about 30 percent of the insured families require maternity coverage every year. He said this high percentage drains the company's funds and threatens its finances. With the cancellation of the maternity insurance, families who are not covered by Israeli government *Kupat Holim* will have to pay maternity costs from their own pockets.

The health insurance business boomed in 1983 when, according to records at the AIE, the number of individuals and institutions who bought their insurance package increased considerably, probably due to increased awareness of insurance programmes and to the deterioration of government-run hospitals in Arab areas. This sudden increase subsided when the price of premiums jumped by as much as 20 percent at some of the commercial companies without warning.

It is not yet known how the health insurance trend will move in light of growing medical costs and insurance premiums. Predictions are that people will increasingly require some kind of health insurance because medical cost increases are still expected to outstrip the cost of insurance. Dr Amin Khatib is certainly betting on this scenario as he sets the plans for his new regional sick fund in motion.

WEEKLY REVIEW

Jamal Milhem of Halhoul was was hit by a bus on February 12 in Jerusalem.

The Restuarant and Hotel Workers' Union held elections on February 9 in Jerusalem.

February 6, 1985

JALAZON MEETS RYDBECK

A delegation representing residents of Jalazon refugee camp north of Ramallah met this week with UNRWA Commissioner-General Olof Rydbeck and explained to him the hard conditions in the camp The delegation urged the commissioner-general not to cut refugee rations.

NAJAH SYMPOSIUM

NABLUS — A symposium entitled "The Economics of the West Bank and the Development Movement" was held at Najah University in Nablus on Tuesday. Speaking at the symposium were Najah faculty, including Drs Abd al-Satar Qassem, Hisham Awartani and Sufian Sultan.

FISHERMEN DENIED PERMITS

GAZA — The Israelis are refusing to issue permits for new fishing boats in the Gaza Strip. Gaza fishermen expressed their resentment at this, saying their boats are too old to be used for fishing now or in the future.

YOUTH JAILED

NABLUS — An Israeli military court in Nablus sentenced Abd al-Nasser Mahmoud Ma'rouf to one-and-a-half years in prison and two years suspended on security charges.

ARMY SHOOTS BOY, 6, IN SIDON

LEBANON — A 6-year-old boy from Sidon in south Lebanon died in hospital after sustaining fatal wounds when Israeli soldiers opened fire February 6. Israeli soldiers opened fire at the Jabal Amal School in Sidon where the boy, Sami was a student.

February 7, 1985

FIREBOMB IN NABLUS

A firebomb was tossed at an Israeli army patrol in the centre of Nablus. Israeli border police combed the area searching for the attackers. Several shop-owners were detained for questioning.

NEW FATWA

JERUSALEM — The Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Sheikh Sa'ad ad-Din al-Alami, has issued a *fatwa* (religious decree) threatening Muslims who sell land to Israel with excommunication.

The *fatwa* says, "Any muslim who parts with so much as a millimetre of Palestinian soil will lose his membership in Islam."

OLIVE TREES DESTROYED

QALQILYA — Unidentified persons uprooted 40 olive trees owned by resident Ali Idris in Qalqilya. Police have begun an investigation into this incident, the second of its kind in recent months.

ARMY TRUCK COLLIDES WITH CHILD

RAMALLAH — An 11-year-old boy from Ramallah was seriously injured when an army truck hit him in the centre of Ramallah. The boy, Jrais Mousa Oadeh, was taken to hospital by a local taxi driver, where he underwent surgery for head and internal injuries.

February 8 1985

DHEISHEH WOMEN SIT-IN

DHEISHEH — Palestinian women from Dheisheh staged a sit-in at UNRWA offices in the camp to protest the authorities' practices against the camp and UNRWA's policy towards refugee camps, especially Dheisheh.

The women issued a statement strongly condemning UNRWA's decision to cut services to refugee camps.

FREIJ RETURNS HOME

BETHLEHEM — Bethlehem Mayor Elias Freij returned home after a five-day visit to Jordan during which he discussed a number of issues with Jordanian officials concerning the municipality.

REFUGEES' PROBLEMS DISCUSSED

The heads of Palestinian refugee camps in the Ramallah district met with the director of UNRWA operations and discussed with him issues concerning the refugee camps and the refugees' demand that rations not be stopped.

STIFF SENTENCES

HALHOUL — A military court in Ramallah sentenced four residents of Halhoul in the Hebron district to various prison terms on security offences.

Ahmad Abd al-Kader was sentenced to eight years in prison; Hatem Yousef al-Baw to seven years; Mohammed Mahmoud Abd al-Karim Abu Rayan to six years and Adel Abd al-Wahed Abu Rayan also to six years in prison.

All were charged with producing Molotov cocktails and throwing them at Israeli cars and buses.

DHEISHEH DIABETIC RELEASED

DHEISHEH — Authorities released Jamal Farraj of Dheisheh camp, who was arrested in the pre-dawn sweep February 1.

Jamal is ill with diabetes. He was hospitalised at Maqassed Hospital in East Jerusalem.

NABLUS YOUTH JAILED, FINED

A military court in Nablus sentenced Qassem Rauf Abd al-Hadi to 70 days in prison, a one-year suspended sentence and a IS300,000 fine on charges of membership in the Palestine Students' Union in Egypt.

Scouts of "Siryet Beit al-Maqdes" performed the *dabkeh* at the Muzha/el-Hakawati Theatre on February 8 to celebrate its first anniversary.

February 10, 1985

PETROL BOMB AT EGGED BUS

AZARIYEH — A petrol bomb was tossed at an Israeli Egged bus in Azariyeh village (Bethany) in Jerusalem. The bomb caused heavy damage to the bus but no injuries were reported.

HEBRON SHOPS REOPENED

HEBRON — Nine shops and a petrol station which were ordered closed by the military a few days ago following stone-throwing attacks at Israeli vehicles were reopened.

ISRAELI CAR STONED

NABLUS — An Israeli vehicle was stoned as it passed through the centre of the city and its windshield was smashed, Israel Radio reported. The report did not mention any injuries.

Israeli military sources said that two shops in the nearby Balata camp had been ordered closed indefinitely "for providing cover for stone-throwing youths."

GAZA CITRUS PRICES RISE

GAZA — The prices of Gaza Strip citrus exported to Amman have recently improved, according to Hisham al-Shawwa, head of the Citrus Producers' Union in the Gaza Strip.

February 11, 1985

14-YEAR-OLD GETS 5-YEAR SENTENCE

DHEISHEH — An Israeli military court in Ramallah sentenced Ahed Mousa Issa, 14, of Dheisheh refugee camp to five years in prison on charges of throwing Molotov cocktails at Israeli vehicles.

Ahed, who is an orphan, was detained on January 15.

PROVOCATIONS CONTINUE

DHEISHEH — Twenty-five Dheisheh residents were notified by the authorities that they will be tried for violating a curfew four months ago. Mohammed al-Hayek, a student at al-Khader School, has been detained for unknown reasons.

NAJAH EMPLOYEES RELEASED

NABLUS — The Israeli authorities released Hisham al-Zu'bi and Adnan al-Damiri, both employees at Najah University in Nablus, after holding them in detention for two weeks. No charges were pressed against them.

2 HEBRON STUDENTS JAILED, FINED

YATTA — Ramallah military court sentenced Mohammed Ibrahim al-Jundi and Fadel Ibrahim Shehadeh al-Najar, both students at Hebron University, to a one-year suspended sentence and an IS500,000 fine on security charges.

The two are residents of Yatta village in the Hebron district.

February 12, 1985

JENIN DENTIST JAILED

JENIN — The Nablus military court sentenced dentist Husam Mustafa Hussein al-Aridi of Jenin to six months' imprisonment, one-and-a-half years suspended and an IS200,000 fine on security charges.

ISRAELI BUS STONED

RAMALLAH — An Israeli bus belonging to the Binyamin settlement near al-Bireh was stoned as it passed through Jalazon camp on the Nablus-Ramallah road. No injuries or damages were reported.

PETROL BOMB AT ISRAELI BUS

RA'I — A petrol bomb was thrown at an Israeli Egged bus near the village of Ra'i in the Jenin district, military sources said. The bomb missed its aim and landed on the ground without exploding, they said. Three people were detained for questioning.

In another incident, Israel Radio reported that an Israeli vehicle was stoned on Faisal Street in the centre of Nablus. The radio said the car's windshield was smashed, but no one was injured.

VILLAGE BESIEGED

AL-AKRIBANIYA — Israeli troops sealed off the village of al-Akribaniya in the Nablus district and rounded up dozens of residents in the village centre for questioning.

This measure came after the headmaster of the village school, Abd al-Karim Abu Sa'deh, was wounded and his nine-year-old daughter killed when unidentified gunmen opened fire at them on Monday.

Sakhnin

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they were investigating whether a crime had actually been committed, as witnesses claimed, and whether or not the complaints were lodged in order to incite Arab villagers against the Jewish communities in the district, with Land Day coming up in a few months' time.

A few days later, about ten members of Kibbutz Kishur helped Father Khouri replant the uprooted olive saplings. Uri Finkerfeld, the Kibbutz Artzi (MAPAM-affiliated kibbutz movement) coordinator of Jewish-Arab cooperation, said that they had gone to Sakhnin to make a point of showing that Arab and Jewish farmers could work together. The Sakhnin local council appreciated the kibbutz members' demonstration of solidarity and their desire to preserve good social relations between the two national groups living in the district. Sitting in Ghanayem's house, I heard remarks such as: "It will help us drive home the idea that in spite of the recent spate of incidents, not everyone on the Jewish side is villainous."

The members of the Sakhnin local council are not the only ones worried by the affect the uprooting incidents may have on the local population. Haim Shamir, the secretary of Kibbutz Lotam, complained bitterly about administrative decisions and actions which create friction and damage Jewish-Arab relations in the region. "They come," he said, "spend a few hours here uprooting trees and then disappear, leaving us to live with 30,000 Arabs who don't differentiate between us and the government. We aren't prepared to be an appendage of the border police or to live in a confrontation zone." Shamir believes that Jewish settlements in the Galilee need not necessarily be established at the expense of the residents of Sakhnin and Arrabeh. "If they broke the law, they should be taken to court. The government should not go around uprooting trees like thieves in the night..." he said.

At Ma'aleh Zviah, the incident was termed "a disgrace." Meanwhile, Ahmad Shala'atah wants to know, "When will they finally realise that Arabs live here too?" (Translation: Al Hamishmar Friday Supplement, February 1, 1985).

Jenin

continued from page 7

administration, and the support they received from Palestinian residents of the West Bank.

The Nablus municipality power company, second in size and area of operation only to the JEC, came under similar threat of confiscation in 1980. Israeli authorities placed many obstacles in the way of development of the power station in order to facilitate its takeover but the municipal council under the leadership of Bassam Shaka'a succeeded in purchasing and installing new generators. "We fought very hard and challenged Israeli orders to achieve this," Shaka'a, who was elected in 1976, maimed in 1980 and deposed in 1982, told *Al Fajr*.

The ever-alert municipal council thwarted this attempt but encroachment has proceeded gradually nevertheless. Late last year, 15 Nablus villages were taken off the Nablus system and forced onto the Israeli grid by a flick of a switch; the original pylons were even kept in use.

Israeli efforts to control West Bank power systems arose from a combination of economic and political motives. Officials at the JEC admit that the electricity business is very profitable, even for a non-subsidised company. The JEC's profits for last year were 50 percent for the value of each share.

Shaka'a told *Al Fajr* that the Nablus power company covered its own expenses and even brought welcome revenue into the municipality's coffers. These profits are now enjoyed by the Israeli-installed municipality, and no one knows how they are used.

On the political level, the Israelis can use electricity to exert uncontested control over the West Bank's development — and therefore its future. Israeli control of such vital resources, like electricity and water, clearly works to their strategic advantage. "Now, no new factory can be built without prior Israeli approval," said Shaka'a, who was personally involved in serious battles against the attempts to stunt and later take over the Nablus power company. In a study entitled *Electric Power in the West Bank and Gaza*, which was prepared for the Conference on Development for Steadfastness which was held in Jerusalem 1981, Mousa Shuman, an electrical engineer who served with the JEC for several years, wrote that controlling power supplies is part of the whole policy of determining all aspects of development in the occupied territories. "This would make us more vulnerable to devastating national and economic exploitation," he wrote. He contended that such control would reflect itself on Palestinian life as well.

Shaka'a told *Al Fajr* that control of electricity is a form of containment and suppression. He added that through controlling power sources, the Israelis aim to arrest Palestinian economic and cultural potential.

Riyad Tamish said that he regards the connection with the Israeli grid as "more of a political move than an economic one. This is just one form of annexation," he added.

This opinion is shared by political activists from the Youth Movement for Voluntary Work and from the Voluntary Works Committee in Jenin. One member of YMVW told *Al Fajr* that "if an appointed mayor uses the supply of electricity to punish his opponents, couldn't the Israeli authorities use the same tactic? Imagine if this was applied on a larger scale," he added quickly.

Thieves in the Night

Israeli Army Flattens Sakhnin's Fields

Yaron Zelig of the Hebrew daily *Al Hamishmar* visited the fields of olive trees which were uprooted and vandalised by the Israeli army in Sakhnin village last month. He describes the incident in detail and conveys the response of the landowners, who speak bitterly about their loss. In 1976, the Israelis declared the same Area 9 – estimated at thousands of dunums – a military zone, but the subsequent Land Day uprising won owners at least partial use of their land.

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Mohammed Ghaneyem, head of Sakhnin's local council, walks through the ruts left by army halftracks in Sakhnin wheat fields.

At approximately 8:00 pm, Thursday, January 24, Mahmoud Mousa Khatib was driving his truck down the dirt road that runs from the village of Arrabeh to Wadi Salma. Mahmoud Sach, Khatib's friend, was sitting in the passenger seat. They were on their way to do some cartage work, which is how Khatib makes his living.

Driving up an incline, Khatib saw a heavy duty army truck accompanied by two jeeps making their way towards the agricultural plots owned by the residents of Sakhnin; there were two tanks on the back of the truck. Returning to Arrabeh an hour later, Khatib saw that the tanks had been taken off the truck and were driving through Mohammed Halil Bashir's field, located just off the dirt road. The two jeeps were parked beside the green truck Khatib had seen earlier and the driver was relaxing in the cab. Khatib pulled up beside an army officer and asked him what was going on. "Get those tanks out of there!" cried Khatib.But the army officer nonchalantly replied, "We're training..."

At about the same time, Haim Shamir, the secretary of Lotam, a nearby kibbutz, was on his way home when he saw one of the tanks at the Ma'aleh Zviah-Arrabeh junction, together with a number of jeeps and a group of border policemen. Shamir drove past them and a few kilometres down the road spotted two more jeeps, one belonging to the border police and the other to the green patrol. He found it odd that there should be so much activity on the road, and the fact that there was a Maccabee basketball game on television that night made it all the more peculiar. "I've been living in Lotam for three-and-a-half years and I've never seen so much traffic on the road," he told me. "I stopped and asked somebody what was going on and was told that it was 'nothing' and to keep on driving."

The next morning everything became clear; the army exercises of the previous night had destroyed about 1000 olive trees, including three, four and five-year-old saplings that had been planted on the plots of land owned by Sakhnin residents and about 100 olive trees that had been planted on the plots belonging to the residents of Arrabeh [over 1300 trees were destroyed – ed]. All in all, the tanks had scurried over 800 dunums of land. The tanks did not confine themselves to destroying olive trees, a traditional symbol of peace; tank tracks were also found on plots of land used for growing wheat and barley. Whereas in the olive orchards the tracks showed that the tanks had driven straight over the trees, in the fields, they had zigzagged back and forth making figure-eights, in order to cause as much damage as possible. Sakhnin residents estimated the damage at about half a billion shekels.

It wasn't the first time Mohammed Halil Bashir's plot had been damaged. At the beginning of 1984, his olive trees were uprooted and there was reason to believe that the culprits were from Ashar, a nearby Nahal army settlement. Mohammed Ghanayem chairperson of the Sakhnin local council, had a talk with the members of the Nahal settlement and an army commander stationed at one of the bases in the vicinity. According to Ghanayem, after a long talk, a few of the Nahal settlers admitted to having entered the area in question. The villagers also turned to MKs Hamed Halayli and Tawfiq Toubi and asked them to intervene in the affair. Toubi raised the matter in the Knesset (question No. 3458)and Moshe Arens, who was minister of defence at the time, replied in April of that same year, informing Toubi that the case had been turned over to the police. "A Ministry of Defence investigation," wrote Arens, "revealed that the area in question does not belong to the army... The army clearly instructs its units not to enter areas that are being farmed."

The Sakhnin local council was shocked by the news of the uprooting operation, especially on account of the fact that it had taken place only a few hours after a meeting with the Sakhnin police chief, Haim Amar, and a representative from Ma'aleh Zviah (a nearby moshav). The Sakhnin council members had tried to find out who was responsible for two incidents in which 105 olive saplings were uprooted on January 5. At first, suspicion fell on the residents of Ma'aleh Zviah, but after the meeting, Sakhnin council chairperson Mohammed Ghanayem was convinced that no one from Ma'aleh Zviah had been involved in the incident. Members of the Sakhnin council left the meeting with the feeling that the January 5 incident would be the last of its kind. The Sakhnin police chief, Haim Amar, had promised the council that he would bring the matter up with his superiors, both in the police force and in the border police.

However, following the incidents at the end of the month, Ghanayem remarked bitterly: "The only thing I've learned from the Jews is not to trust verbal promises. From now on, I want everything down in black and white."

Ghanayem claims that the reply MK Toubi recieved from the minister of defence removes any doubt that at least some of the plots damaged last week were not being used by the army for military exercises. Moreover, the minister of defence had written to Toubi that army units are instructed not to enter cultivated areas. Hence, the incident is all the more scandalous. According to Ghanayem, Arab-Jewish relations in the area had been quite good prior to the uprooting incidents. He is convinced that the olive trees were intentionally uprooted.

A Ministry of Defence spokesperson confirmed that the army had uprooted the trees on January 24 but claimed that the trees in question were within Area No. 9 – which is used as a shooting range. According to the spokesperson, local residents occasionally enter restricted areas in order to plant saplings, sow crops and put their herds to pasture, thereby seeking to present the authorities with a *fait accompli*. The spokesperson went on to say that the green patrol, operating in conjunction with the army, had warned the owners about the outcome of the plots, but to no avail. "After repeated warnings," he said, "they were informed that their saplings would be uprooted."

The Sakhnin council totally rejects these claims. First of all, according to the Ministry of Defence, at least one of the plots in question is not within the area used by the army for its exercises. According to Mohammed Ghanayem, many of the saplings were planted two or three years ago and no one has tried to uproot them until now. He wants to know "why they suddenly remembered that it was a military area." Furthermore, Sakhnin residents reject the claim of the Ministry of Defence spokesperson that any of the official agencies involved warned the owners of the plots about what was going to happen. For the first three years after the plots were declared off-limits, the villagers obeyed the closure order and did not interfere with military exercises taking place there.

But when new settlements were built in the area, they were informed that they no longer needed special permits to enter the area. Ahmad Shala'atah, one of the villagers whose plots was damaged, put great stress on the point that when five years ago he applied to the local police for a permit in order to enter the area – in keeping with the routine procedure – he was told that he no longer needed one. Shala'atah pointed to the double standard whereby the residents of Ma'aleh Zviah – which was built in the middle of the "shooting range" – are allowed to use adjacent land for grazing while the villagers of Sakhnin and Arrabeh are prohibited from cultivating their plots. "And after what they did, they want to talk to us about peace!" he angrily exclaimed. "Before making peace with Egypt, they ought to make peace with me. I live here. I am a citizen of this country. We work here. And it saddens me that a people who has endured so much suffering has no empathy for the suffering of another people."

Local residents also point out that there are no signs in the area warning the public that it is a shooting range; likewise, cars from other settlements in the vicinity regularly drive through the area. "If it is a military area, why were civilian settlements built here? Why are civilians allowed access to the area?" Ghanayem wants to know. "If it's a military area, then they ought to make it public. For the past few years, the army has not been in evidence here at all, in contrast to the situation following the establishment of the state."

Ghanayem is aware that the uprooting operation strengthens extremist elements in both the Arab and Jewish camps. He believes that if similar acts take place, the villagers could adopt extremist stands, especially with Land Day coming up in a few months' time.

But the January 24 uprooting operation was not the last of its kind. On the afternoon of January 28, Shala'atah Kassim Namir was driving a tractor past the plot belonging to the village priest – Yousef Khouri. As he approached Khouri's plot, Namir saw a jeep parked by the side of the road. Four young men got out of the car and began uprooting olive saplings with their bare hands. According to Namir, one of them was wearing a nature authority uniform. When they saw him, they returned to their jeep and drove off. Namir went to the police and reported what he had seen; he was also able to provide them with the license plate number of the jeep – 11047-80. He explained that he hadn't attempted to approach them because he thought they might have been armed, in which case, "had I been threatened, I wouldn't have been able to do anything."

A local resident I spoke to told me that he had recognised one of the men, who, he claimed, was a green patroller. The four managed to uproot 145 saplings before they were disturbed. The owner of the plot, Yousef Khouri, lodged a complaint at the Sakhnin police station, estimating the damage at IS2 million.

The Acre police department, to which the Sakhnin police are subordinated, turned the investigation over to the army, which is responsible for the area in which the incident occurred. As regards the complaint lodged by Khouri, Moni Artzi – the regional police department's spokesperson – said police had launched a two-pronged investigation;

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